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# FISM AND VEDANTA

Part II.: Some prominent Sufis and their doctrines

ROMA CHAUDHURI

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Vol. I

**SUFISM AND VEDANTA**

Part II    Some Great Sufis & their doctrines

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# Sufism and Vedānta

## PART.II

### Some Great Sufis and their doctrines

#### I RABIA

As pointed out in Part I, Rabia was one of the early Sufis, and a famous woman saint. Her system is not speculative, but practical. Asceticism and romanticism are the central themes of her doctrine. The goal is conceived by her as union with God, and her chief concern was to point out the way to this goal, rather than indulge in speculations regarding the nature of God, of soul, of this union between God and Soul.

She chalked out, and herself practised, a graduated path, consisting of a number of stages, through which the soul rises higher and higher, until it attains, finally, the supreme Goal, the Beatific Vision of God, and comes to be united with Him. The attainment of the Goal is due partly to the Soul's own efforts, no doubt, but mainly to the Grace of the Lord. The path consists of the following main stages :—

Repentance, Patience, Gratitude, Holy Fear, Voluntary Poverty, Asceticism, Complete Dependence on God and finally Love, including passionate longing for the Beloved or God, intimacy with Him and satisfaction. Other Sufi writers, also, propound the same or similar Path.

*Repentance (Tawba) :—*Rabia, like other saints of all ages, was intensely and constantly conscious of her own worthlessness and sin, and hence she laid the greatest emphasis on repentance as the very first necessity of a spiritual progress. Sin, she points out, is the greatest blot on the soul, not because it leads to Hell, but because it separates the soul from its Beloved. None but the pure can approach the All-Pure Lord, and as sin acts as a barrier, it must be first got rid of. And, unless one

realises and repents for his sins, there is no possibility of expiation. Hence, repentance is of prime importance in the moral life.

But how can one attain this first stage of Repentance? 'Only through the grace of God', answers Rabia. Repentance is a gift of God Himself and not the result of one's unaided effort. It is God Himself who graciously leads the sinner away from the path of sin, and makes him repent his past misdeeds. "If I seek repentance myself", says Rabia, "I shall have need of repentance again." Again, "Our asking for forgiveness of God, itself needs forgiveness." It is stated in the 'Risala' of Al-Qshayri that a man asked Rabia, "I have sinned against God. If I repent, will He accept my repentance?" "No," replied Rabia, "But if He turns towards you, you will turn towards Him." All this indicates how Rabia completely depended on God's grace in all matters.

*Patience (Sabr)* :—A true believer should accept in patience whatever afflictions God is pleased to inflict on him—to doubt God's wisdom or mercy is the height of infidelity. "If I will a thing," says Rabia, "and my Lord does not will it, I shall be guilty of unbelief." Patience is a higher stage than Repentance, and unless one repents, one cannot be patient.

*Gratitude (Shukr)* :—Gratitude is complementary to Patience. Gratitude means accepting thankfully what God is pleased to bestow on us. Higher and real gratitude, of course, extends not only to benefits, but also to calamities.

*Hope (raja) & Fear (Khawf)* :—Hope means the hope of attaining union with God, fear means the fear of separation from Him. These are the two fetters of the soul that keep it away from straying off the path.

*Poverty (faqr)* :—Poverty implies not only the absence of worldly possessions, but also the absence of any desire, except that for God.

*Asceticism* :—Asceticism is connected with Poverty. It implies complete renunciation of the world. The mind must be altogether free from the phenomenal order so that it may rise to the spiritual level. Rabia, in common with other Sufis, emphasised this asceticism to the extreme. She feared to possess even reputation as a saint and refrained from displaying her knowledge and power.

*Dependence upon God* :—A true devotee must not ask anything of God, but put himself in the hand of God without question. Rabia herself practised this strictly all throughout her life.

*Love* :—Love only can level down all differences and bring high and low, master and servant together, Love must be one-pointed and disinterested:

## II Dhu'l Nun-al-Misri.

Dhu'l-Nun's teachings were systematised and recorded by the great Sufi teacher Junayd; and are also preserved in Hujwiri's 'Kashf' Al-Mahjub ("The Revelation of the Mystery") Kalabadhi's "al-Ta'arruf" ("Doctrine of Sufis"), Faridud-Din Attar's "Tadhkiratu 'l-Awliya" ("Memoirs of the saints) and many such works. Some of the passages ascribed to Dhu'l Nun in the above works are quoted below to give the reader a first-hand idea of his main doctrines.

### *Definition of Sufism.*

Dhu'l-Nun defines Sufism thus: "The Sufi is he whose language, when he speaks, is the reality of his state, that is, he says nothing which he is not. And when he is silent, his conduct explains his state, and his state proclaims that he has cut off all worldly ties."<sup>1</sup> Thus this definition insists on truthfulness and asceticism as the prime characteristics of a Sufi. There is an anecdote related by Kalabadhi in his 'Ta'arruf' (p. 11). Once Yusuf ibn al-Husayn asked Dhu'l-Nun: "With whom shall I associate?" He answered: "With him who possesses nothing, and does not disapprove of any state thou happenest to be in; who does not change when thou changest, even though that change be great, for the more violently thou changest the greater is thy need of him." Of course, here he meant a Sufi. It is clear from this that according to Dhu'l-Nun, a Sufi, though an ascetic, is not a cynic or a misanthrope, disdaining to mix with the world's multitudes in the pride of his superior knowledge and purity. On the contrary, it is the special mission of a Sufi to help others in the path of spiritual progress as much as he can, whatever be their station or position in life.

### *The Goal*

Now, what is the goal of a Sufi? Complete union with God (tawhid). The soul, separated from its Maker and lost in the maze of the world, must strive to reunite itself with Him, and this must be the only aim of its life. Abu Sa'id al-kharraz (d. 890 A.D.) of Baghdad, a pupil of Dhu'l-Nun was the first to propound the doctrine of Fana or

1. Quoted in Hujwiri's "Kashf" p. 36.



the sight by the physical eye, and seek for hidden truths by the heart, not by the physical self, for "the pearl is to be found within the shell," but the eye sees the shell only, not the pearl. Thus, like a true mystic, Dhu'l-Nun recommends spiritual intuition, and not ordinary experience, as the only means to a spiritual communion with the Lord.

Dhu'l-Nun distinguishes between 'Knowledge' and 'Certainty' thus: "Every thing which the eyes see is related to knowledge and that which the hearts know is related to certainty."<sup>1</sup>

This gnosis is the gift of God Himself. Says Dhu'l-Nun "Real knowledge is God's illumination of the heart with the pure radiance of knowledge—the Sun can be seen by the light of the sun alone." Again, "Gnosis is in reality God's 'providential communication of the spiritual light to our inmost hearts.'"<sup>2</sup>

That is, until God, in His Divine Providence and infinite mercy, purifies and illuminates the heart of man, and generates in him a disgust for every earthly thing, he cannot unravel the Divine mystery and attain a direct intuition of God.

A Gnostic is in the world, but not of the world. "He is a man who being with them, is yet apart from them."<sup>3</sup> He has no attachment to anything but God.

Gnostics are completely dependent on God alone. "They that know God," says Dhu'l-Nun, "are not in themselves and subsist not through themselves but so far as they are themselves, they subsist through God. They move as God causes them to move, and their words are the words of God which roll upon their tongues, and their sight is the sight of God which has entered their eyes." When Dhu'l-Nun was asked: "Who is a gnostic?" He replied: "He was here, and departed,"<sup>4</sup> meaning (according to Kalabadhi) that the gnostic is never seen on two occasions in the same state, because he is controlled by Another.

Again, in reply to the enquiry: "What is the end of the gnostic?" he replied, "When he is as he was where he was before he was," meaning (according to Kalabadhi) that a gnostic contemplates God and His actions rather than contemplating himself and his action.

When asked: "What is the first step a gnostic must surmount," Dhu'l-Nun replied, "Bewilderment; then need, then union, then

1. Kalabadhis 'Ta'arruf'. 2. Hujwiri's "Kashf"

3. "Ta'arruf". p. 140. 4. *op cit.* p. 139.

bewilderment." This means (according to Kalabadhi): that the first bewilderment is at God's acts and bounties towards him. He is here on the horns of a dilemma. He knows that his gratitude is not equal to God's bounties and he ought to be properly grateful for them. But this proper gratefulness, too, is a bounty of God, for which, too, he must be equally and properly grateful, and so on. So he feels bewildered. The second bewilderment is in the pathless wildernesses of unification, in which the gnostic's understanding is lost and his intellect shrinks before the greatness of God's power, awe and majesty. "The more a man knoweth God," says Dhu'l-Nun, "the deeper and greater is his bewilderment in God," because although the sun can be seen only through the light of the sun itself, yet the nearer a man approaches the sun, the more is he dazzled. In the same manner, a saint who knows God through divinely illuminated heart is bewildered at first, until he reaches a point where he is not he. This is ecstasy.

Thus Dhu'l-Nun gives a distinctive turn to Sufism, firstly, by his theory of the distinction between traditional or intellectual Knowledge ('ilm) and mystical knowledge of God (ma'rifat); and secondly by his theory of love of God (mahabbat) as the means to the latter. His teachings on the subject may be summarised as follows:—

1. Knowledge of God is an immediate experience transcending mere intellectual apprehension which is mediate.
2. It is an emotional state, an ecstatic contemplation of Divine Beauty, not an intellectual passionless state of serenity. It is realising by the heart, not knowing by the head.
3. It is a gift of God Himself. The divinely illuminated heart alone can contemplate the Divine.
4. When reaching its climax, it passes over to the state of complete ecstasy that involves the disappearance of the individual self as such, and the substitution of divine qualities for the human. In the state of ecstasy, the knower and the Known, the lover and the Beloved become one, and all duality disappears.

"True knowledge of God," says "Dhu'l-Nun" is not the knowledge of Him derived from proof and demonstration, which belongs to philosophers, rhetoricians and theologians; but it is the knowledge of the attributes of Divine Unity, which belongs to the saints of God, those who behold God with their hearts in such wise that He reveals unto them what He revealeth not unto any one else in the world."

*Love* : "Gnosis and Love are spiritually identical, they teach the same truths in different language. *Divine Love, holds Dhu'l-Nun, is a secret treasure that must not be revealed to the profane.*

*Ecstasy* :—It is generally held that Dhu'l-Nun introduced the doctrine that the knowledge of God can be obtained only through ecstasy (Wajd). "The man that knows God best," says he, "is the one most lost in Him." Ecstasy lifts the veil between God and man and brings the two together. To the Sufi, the union with God through ecstasy is the only good, and separation from Him through love of the world the only evil. "Fear of the Fire (Hell), in comparison with the fear of being parted from the Beloved, is like a drop of water cast into the mightiest ocean."

In explaining the state of intimacy with the Lord, Dhu'l-Nun says : "The lowest station of intimacy is that, a man should be cast into the Fire, and yet not be made absent thereby from Him with whom he has been familiar."<sup>1</sup> That is, even when thrown in Hell, he should feel God's beatific and beneficial Presence all around, and this is only the first step in intimacy.

#### *Rites and Rituals.*

Like other mystics, Dhu'l-Nun also stressed inner cleanliness and communion more than external observance of rites and rituals; and himself went to the length of even neglecting the observance of the orthodox ritual prayers and is said to have advised other ascetics also in doing so. He was the first saint to follow the path of the extraordinary "Malamati order" ("Blameworthy order"), which was actually founded by his disciple Hamdun'l-Qassar. (d. 884 A.D.) The saints of this order are generally supposed to have a special relation with God which exempts them from all Divine and human laws. But the real idea behind the order seems to be that a man should prefer the path of blame and ill-repute to that of pious life and honour because honour may divert him away from God. The idea is, in the words of Hujwiri, that "the more he is separated from mankind the more he is united to God."<sup>2</sup> Hence, a saint should purposely pretend to live a life of sin. Of course, it led to many disastrous consequences and not a few have led a sinful life under the pretext of following this order.

*Music* :—The state of ecstasy and gnosis being really a gift of God is really an immediate, involuntary state. Many stories are related how

1. "Ta'arruf", p. 93. 2. "Kashf", p. 66.

many saints fell into ecstatic trances and remained in that state even for many days at a stretch. But some artificial methods were also formulated for inducing this state,—such as, concentration of thought, recollection and so on, and even altogether external means like music, singing and dancing. These later are called 'sama' (audition). Some approved, others condemned these latter means. Dhu'l-Nun expressed a middle view with regard to it. "Music," says he, "is a divine influence which stirs the heart to seek God: those who listen to it spiritually attain unto God, and those who listen to it sensually fall unto unbelief."

*Miracles* :—The Sufis generally believed in the miraculous powers of saints. The story is stated about Dhu'l-Nun that he made a sofa move round the room. His view, as quoted by Hujwiri, is that a saint can perform a miracle only when in a state of ecstasy when his faculties are completely under the control of God.

### III. Abu Yazid or Bayazid al-Bistami

His teachings, too, are preserved in many treatises on Sufism and memories of Saints, like Hujwiri's "Kashf Al-Mahjub" Attar's "Tadhkiratu'l-Awliya" and so on. Some of these scattered quotations are collected here.

#### *The Goal*

Bayazid was the first great exponent of the doctrine of fana (self-annihilation), and hence he has been accused by many of Pantheism, or the theory that identifies God with the Universe. The aim of man is to merge himself completely in God, losing his separate personality. Really speaking, man is identical with God, and it is through ignorance only that he takes himself to be a separate individual, independent and self-subsistent,—separate from other men, separate from all creatures and objects found in the world. But God is the one immediate principle underlying the whole universe. Hence, the Universe itself is nothing but God Himself. From the point of view of knowledge, not ordinary knowledge but gnosis or mystical intuition, God, soul and matter are all one. Some of the sayings attributed to Bayazid and preserved in the Manuals on Sufism and Memoirs of Saints, are as follows :—"Verily I am God, there is no God except me, so worship me." "Beneath this cloak of mine, there is nothing but God." "Glory to me! (subhani) how great is my majesty." "I went from God to God until they cried from 'O Thou I.'" "I am the wine-drinker, and the wine and me in me

the cup-bearer." "I came forth from Bayzid-ness as a snake from its skin. Then I looked. I saw that lover, beloved and love are one, for in the world of unification all can be one." "Creatures are subject to 'states', but the gnostic has no 'state', because his vestiges are effaced and his essence is annihilated by the essence of another and his traces are lost in another's traces." "Nothing is better for Man than to be without aught, having no asceticism, no theory, no practice, when he is without all, he is with all." "Thirty years the high God was my mirror, now I am my own mirror,"—the meaning being that 'I' and 'God'—these two principles are detrimental to Gods' absolute unity. Hence, now that which I was, I am no more, and as I am no more, God is His own mirror."

Sayings like the above, if authentic, cannot but establish an Absolute Monism,—the conception of a single unitary Principle in whom, finally, all plurality is merged and annihilated. The stress is here on "fana" or cancellation of all separate essence and individuality rather than on 'baqa' or subsistence through the retention of separate essence and individuality. That is why Bayazid defines the perfect and complete man as one who having been invested with divine attributes becomes unconscious of them in the state of fana. Still Bayazid cannot be properly termed a pantheist, as he recognised God's transcendence too.

### *The Means*

Bayazid formulates the usual means to this goal, viz. subjugation of the lower self, repentance, patience, asceticism, faith, and so on, and finally gnosis and love.

*Self-control*:—The lower soul, he points out, "is an attribute that never rests save on falsehood." Hence the saint, aiming at truth, should get rid of the lower self first. When the soul or the lower self is mastered, then and then alone can the heart grasp the divine secret. Hence Bayazid says: "The contraction of hearts consists in the expansion of souls, and the expansion of hearts in the contraction of soul."<sup>1</sup>

*Patience*—Again a saint should cultivate the great virtue of patience. A saint is "that one who is patient under the command and prohibition of God."

*Indifference*—He should further, be absolutely indifferent to all things, here or hereafter, except God. It is the greatest sin on the

1. "Kashf" p. 375. 2. *op cit.* p. 217.

part of a saint to indulge in even thoughts about worldly and heavenly things, not to speak of their actual enjoyment. "Whenever a thought of this world occurs to my mind," says Bayazid, "I perform a purification, and whenever a thought of the next world occurs to me I perform a complete ablution." Even the very thought of anything other than God pollutes the devotee for which penances should be made.

In fact, to a saint, the worldly life counts nothing at all, but only the spiritual life. The story is stated by Hujwiri that when Bayazid was asked about his age, he replied :—"Four years." All asked in surprise : 'How can that be?' He answered : "I have been veiled (from God) by this world for seventy years, but I have seen him during the last four years : the period in which one is veiled does not belong to one's life." Therefore, to the saint, the life of contemplation, spiritual vision and union with God is the only life, the time spent in ocular vision is not reckoned as life, but as death.

*Shunning Honour* :—A saint should shun even honour so that he may not be veered away from his desire for the Lord. Hujwiri relates another story about Bayazid. When Bayazid was entering Rayy, the people of that city ran to meet him and honour him befittingly. Their attentions distracted him and turned him away from the contemplation of God. So, he brought out a loaf and began to eat it. As that was the month of Ramzan, people left him in disgust, and he was left in peace to continue his thoughts of God undisturbed.

*Dependence on God* :—A saint should, further, be completely dependent on God for all things, great and small. Such a person alone is a real ruler, as he has suppressed his independent wishes, and dedicated himself, heart and soul, to God alone. "A prince is he," says Bayazid, "to whom no choice is left, and to whom God's choice has become the only choice."

*Charity* :—Universal charity is another mark of a Sufi. It results from the apprehension of the immanence of God in any and everything, high or low. Early Sufis, laying an exclusive stress on asceticism and other-worldliness alone, despised natural human affections. The story goes that one day Fudayl ibn 'Iyad had in his lap a child of four years and chanced to give it a kiss. 'Father,' asked the child; "do you love me?" "Yes", replied, Fudayl. "Do you love God?" "Yes." "How many hearts have you?" "One," "Then," asked the child, "how can you love two with one heart?" On hearing this, Fudayl began to beat his head and repented for his human affections. But later Sufis, stressing

mystic love more than mere asceticism, recognised the love for others as complementary to the love for God. A Sufi is indifferent to the world at large, but not inimical to it. Selfish desire for worldly objects is quite distinct from unselfish love for all. The former alone is incompatible with Divine Love; not the latter, on the contrary universal love leads to and also follows from love of God. Hence Bayazid points out that when God loves man, He endows him with the three qualities as a token thereof—viz. a bounty like that of the sea, a sympathy like that of the sun, and a humility like that of the earth. Hence, a saint's bounty must be illimitable and constant like the sea; his sympathy must be all-extending like the sun-rays, making no distinction between high and low; and his patience and humbleness must be like that of the earth. A story is related about Bayazid, that once he purchased some cardamon seed at Hamadhan, and put some inside his garment before leaving the place. On reaching Bistam, he took out the seed and found some ants on it. Saying: "I have carried the poor creatures away from their homes," he at once went back to Hamadhan, a distance of several hundred miles.

*Gnosis* :—Gnosis or immediate spiritual vision, is the most difficult thing on earth. "I strove in the spiritual combat, for thirty years," says Bayazid, "and I found nothing harder to me than knowledge and its pursuit. One of his definitions of Gnosis is "Gnosis consists in knowing that the motion and rest of mankind depend on God." This definition of gnosis implies that even in gnosis the apprehension of duality between the controller and the controlled persists. In fact, gnosis rests on a three-fold distinction, viz. between knower, knowledge and known.

Gnosis is possible through the divine gift of illumination. "He who discourses of eternity" says Bayazid "must have within him the lamp of eternity."

*Love* :—"Love", says Bayazid, "consists in regarding your own much as little and your Beloved's little as much." God's love is of this form, for He regards His bounties to men as little, but accepts their devotion as much.

According to Bayazid, love, though the only means of bringing man near God, yet fails to bring him in direct contact with him, for like gnosis, it, too, rests on a dualistic conception between the lover and the Beloved. That is, here, too, we have a three-fold distinction of love, lover and Beloved.

"Paradise", says Bayazid "hath no value in the eyes of lovers, and lovers are veiled (from God) by their love." This means (according to Hujwiri) first, that Paradise, being a created thing, is far inferior to love which is an uncreated attribute of God. Hence, a Sufi scorns Paradise and hankers for love alone. But, secondly, this love, too, acts as a veil between the lover and the beloved. Hence love becomes a second something, separating the two, and is incompatible with a complete unification (*tawhid*), which is the supreme goal of life. Love seeks complete unity, but there is this defect in love that it requires a desirer, the lover, and an object desired, the beloved. Either God must be a desirer and man an object of desires, or vice versa. If the first, then man remains as a 'being' in God's desire. If the second, then the 'being' of man's love acts as a veil between him and his Beloved. In both the cases, the canker of 'being', of duality remains in the lover. Thus, even love fails to effect the complete union of man and God.

In spite of this fact, love is the highest virtue, for it brings us nearer to God than anything else. To the lover, God is the only Beloved, the only object worth contemplating and having. "Notwithstanding that the lovers of God are separated from Him by their love," says Bayazid, "they have the essential thing, for whether they sleep or wake, they seek and are sought, and are not occupied with their seeking and loving, but are enraptured in the contemplation of the Beloved."

Love, like gnosis, is a gift of God. "I fancied that I loved Him," says Bayazid, "but on consideration I saw that His love preceded mine."

*Ecstasy* :—Gnosis gives us an immediate intuition as to the Divine Nature, while love brings us nearest to the Divine Beauty. Thus, gnosis and love are but two sides of the same thing. Both stand for a direct realisation of God through divine revelation, only gnosis emphasises the intellectual side (though not in the ordinary sense), but love emphasises the emotional side of the revelation. But both are somewhat imperfect, as in both, as we have seen, a small trace of duality remains. Hence they must be superseded by a still higher state—viz. ecstasy or intoxication. Ecstasy does not differ from gnosis and love in kind, but only in degree,—it is but their highest form and perfection. So long as the knower considers himself as knowing and the lover as loving, his heart is not completely emptied of 'otherness', and a veil remains between him and God. "It is a crime in the lover," says Bayazid, "to regard his Love, and an outrage in love to look at one's own seeking while one is face to face with the sought."



But in ecstasy, the knower and the lover no longer regards himself as a separate individual knowing and loving, but loses himself in God, and becomes completely one with his Beloved. Even love itself disappears, and nothing remains between the two, and the two become one.

Thus gnosis and love constitute the first stage towards a perfect union with God. Through this stage, for the first time, plurality gradually disappears, duality results—all things are reduced to two only—the lover and the Beloved. "His love entered and removed all besides Him," says Bayazid, "and left no trace of anything else, so that it remained single even as He is Single." Finally, even that duality is superseded in an all-embracing ecstasy, and nothing but a Unity is left, and man becomes completely merged in God. This annihilation of the lover in the everlastingness of love is, according to Bayazid, more perfect than his subsistence through the everlastingness of love, for such a subsistence implies a difference between God and man, but the lover cannot brook the slightest separation from his Beloved. Such is the paradox of love: the lover to be really united with Beloved must rise above love itself,—love that brings the two together must destroy itself in this very act of uniting them. Only through the annihilation of knowledge itself can the knower know God, only through the death of love itself can the lover be united with his Beloved.

In this state, the gnostic realises that knowledge, knower and known, love, lover and the beloved are all one. This gnosis of unity is a stage higher than gnosis itself, and is called, 'the truth' (*haqiqat*) as distinguished from 'gnosis' (*ma'rifat*). Even higher than this state is the state of *fana al-fana*, or 'annihilation of annihilation', when the very consciousness itself of being united with God, too, disappears and ecstasy itself is swallowed up in the all-embracing undifferentiated unity.

Intoxication through which alone the state of higher gnosis is attainable is, Bayazid points out, to be preferred to sobriety. *Sobriety* is the cause of the fixity of human attributes which are the greatest veil between God and man. If man continues to be human, how can he become Divine? But intoxication produces the destruction of human attributes like foresight, choice, self-dependence etc., and leaves behind only divine qualities. It was under this state of intoxication that Bayazid cried: "Verily, I am God, there is no God except me so worship me." The story goes that when a disciple of Dhu'l-Nun asked to see Bayazid, Bayazid replied: "Who is Bayazid, and where is he, and what thing is he? I have been seeking him for long, but I have not found him."

His state was described by Dhu'l-Nun thus: "He is lost with those who are lost in God." Again, once when Bayazid was in his cell, some one asked: "Is Bayazid here?" He promptly replied: "Is anyone here except God?"

### *Rites and Rituals*

Bayazid, too, emphasised inner purity more than the formal adherence to external rites and rituals, merely for the sake of custom. For example, he pointed out the futility of visiting holy places when the mind is impure. "On my first pilgrimage," says he, "I saw only the temple; the second time, I saw both the temple and the Lord of the temple; and the third time, I was the Lord alone."

In the same manner, he depreciated the needless wanderings of saints thus: "The inconsiderate walk of a dervish is a sign that he is heedless (of God), because all that exists is attained in two steps: One step away from self-interest and the other step firmly planted on the commandments of God."

But although Bayazid did not attach any great importance to the observance of external codes and customs, yet he was very careful to emphasise the inner religious law, and obedience to it. This is clear from his saying: "The unbelief of the magnanimous is nobler than the Islam of the covetous." There is an anecdote about Bayazid that when he found a saint spitting on the floor of a mosque, he at once turned away from him, saying "A saint must keep the religious law in order that God may keep him in his spiritual state. Had this man been a saint, his respect for the law would have prevented him from spitting on to the floor, or God would have saved him from marring the grace vouchsafed to him."

*Miracles* :—Bayazid set little value on miracles "During my novitiate," he says, "God used to bring before me wonders and miracles, but I paid no heed to them and when He saw that I did so He gave me the means to attaining to knowledge of Himself." Saints do not rejoice, he points out, in possessing miraculous powers of walking on water, or moving in the air etc, for a fish can swim in the water and a bird can fly in the air, and a real believer is more honourable than either a fish or a bird. "Let not any one" he advised, "who is perplexed by such things, put any faith in this trickery."

### IV. Al-Hallaj

Hallaj's teachings and sayings are preserved in the works of Kalabadhi, Hujwini and others. Kalabadhi refers to and quotes from him

often. However, he never calls him by name, but only as "one of the great Sufis", except twice, when he calls him Abu'l Mughith. Hallaj was the author of a work called 'Kitab-al-Tawasin,' in which he develops a doctrine of saintship. This work is very abstruse and difficult to grasp. It is this work that contains the famous saying of Hallaj. "Ana'l-Haqq,"—I am the Truth (or God)". This may be taken as the intuitive formula of all Mystic Theology. This work contains eleven sections, and each section, except the last, is called "Ta Sin", as "The Ta Sin of the Unity" and so on. These names are from the two unexplained letters found in the beginning of certain chapters in the Qu'ran. Hence the whole work is called "Kitab al-Tawasin" or "Book of Ta and Sin."

### God

God is without beginning and end, beyond the limits of space and time, unsupported, unconditioned, eternal, one. In a beautiful passage Hallaj describes God thus: "'Before' does not outstrip Him, 'after' does not interrupt Him, 'of' does not vie with Him for precedence, 'from' does not accord with Him, 'in' does not inhabit Him, 'when' does not stop Him, 'over' does not overshadow Him, 'opposite' does not face Him, 'with' does not press Him, 'behind' does not take hold of Him, 'before' does not limit Him, 'previous' does not display Him, 'after' does not cause Him to pass away, 'all' does not unite Him, 'is' does not bring Him to being, 'is not' does not deprive Him of Being. Concealment does not veil Him, His pre-existence preceded time, His being preceded not-being, His eternity preceded limit. If thou sayest 'when', His existence has outstripped time; if thou sayest 'before', before is after Him; if thou sayest 'he', 'h' and 'e' are His creation; if thou sayest 'how'. His essence is veiled from description; if thou sayest 'where', His being preceded space"<sup>1</sup>.

To God nothing is impossible. He is an abode of apparently contradictory qualities, but these do not mar His essence "Other than He," continues Hallaj, "no one can be qualified by two (opposite) qualities at one time; and yet with Him they do not create opposition. He is outward and inward, near and far; and in this respect, He is removed beyond the resemblance of creation. He acts without contact, instructs without meeting, guides without pointing. Desires do not conflict with Him, thoughts do not mingle with Him, His essence is without qualification, His action without effort."

<sup>1</sup> Kalabadhi's 'Ta'arruf' p. 85

*Doctrine of Creation.*

In the very beginning, "before all things, before creation, before His knowledge of creation, God in His unity was holding an ineffable discourse with Himself and contemplating the splendour of His essence in itself. That pure simplicity of His self-admiration is Love, which is His essence, the essence of essence, beyond all limitation of attributes." Therefore, in the very beginning God was a perfectly undifferentiated Being, a pure Essence without any limiting attributes, a pure unity, simple and alone.

(2) Then, "in His perfect isolation, God loves Himself, praises Himself, and manifests Himself by Love. And it was this first manifestation of Love in the Divine Absolute, that determined the multiplicity of His attributes and names." Thus, in the second stage, the pure undifferentiated Essence comes to be differentiated by various qualities and names.

(3) Then "God by His essence, in His essence, desires to project out of Himself His supreme joy, that Love in aloneness, that He might behold it and speak to it. He looked in eternity, and brought forth from non-existence an image, an image of Himself, endowed with all His attributes and all His names: Adam. The Divine look made that form to be His image unto everlasting. God saluted it, glorified it, and in as much as He manifested Himself by it and in it, that created form became 'Huwa Huwa' 'He, He'." Hence in the third stage, man is created by God in His own image and thus deified.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, there are three distinct stages in the life of the Absolute —

(1) The stage of pure Being or Essence, without any attributes and names. The Essence of God is Love.

(2) The stage of the appearance of attributes and names in Him through the manifestation of His Essence or Love. This is the first manifestation of God's Essence or Love.

(3) The stage of the appearance of man through the projection of His Essence or Love. This is the second manifestation of God's Essence or Love.

Hence, the universe was created out of nothing simply through God's Essence or Love. The purpose of creation is that God, feeling lonely, wanted to share his own Essence, Love or Joy with another, viz. man, in whom He may behold Himself as in a mirror, with whom

<sup>1</sup> From *Kitab al-Tawasin*.

He may associate; and the principle of creation is Love or Joy alone. There was nothing beside God, and God created the universe out of His own essence alone. Hence the universe is really God in essence. Man is the crown of creation, as he was created by God in His own image, and the entire universe was designed for the perfection of man. This was later on developed into the doctrine of "Perfect Man" by Ibn Arabi in the 13th Century A.D. and Jili in the 14th Century A.D.

### *Doctrine of two Nature in God*

God possesses a two-fold nature—a divine nature (lahut) and a human nature (nasut). In Adam, in whom God manifests Himself, these two natures and the Divine spirit and the human spirit, combine. Thus, a Perfect Man objectifies the entire Divine nature. It may seem strange that Hallaj regards Jesus, not Mohammed, as the perfect type of deified man, who is the representative of God on earth.

### *Doctrines of Commixture and Incarnation*

This union of the Lahut and the Nasut, or divine and human natures, is called "hulul" (incarnation). Hulul implies that the union (tawhid) between God and man takes place in the present life and God enters the human soul in the same manner as the soul enters the body at birth. In other words, God incarnates Himself on earth through the Perfect Man. As the 'humanity' (nasut) of God consists of the entire physical and spiritual nature of man, the 'divinity' (lahut) of God can unite with it only by means of an incarnation in whom the two natures commingle. Thus incarnation is due to the Commixture (imtiazaj) of divine and human natures.

Some poems of Hallaj seem to suggest the doctrine of Commixture, e.g. "Thy spirit is mingled in my spirit, as wine is mingled with pure water. When anything touches Thee, it touches me. So, in every case, Thou art I."

"I am He whom I love, and He whom I love is I."

We are two spirits dwelling in one body.

If thou seest me, thou seest Him, and if thou seest Him, thou seest us both."

"Thou art with me between my heart and the flesh of my heart. Thou flowest like tears from my eye-lids."

There is a famous poem of Hallaj which seems to propound the doctrine of Incarnation.

"Glory to God who revealed in His humanity (i.e. in Adam) the secret of his radiant divinity.

And then appeared to His creatures visibly in the shape of one who eats and drinks.

So that His creatures could perceive Him as in the flicker of an eyelid (i.e. Jesus)."

The doctrines of Commixture and Incarnation being altogether opposed to the view of Orthodox Islam, the majority of the later Sufis, however, try to prove that Hallaj never taught these doctrines. Hujwiri, e.g. holds that it is altogether wrong to attribute the doctrines of incarnation (hulul) commixture (imtizaj) and transmigration of spirits (naskh-i-arwah) to Hallaj, though some have erroneously tried to do so.

In any case, the above quotations seem to support the view that Hallaj did propound some kind of doctrine of Incarnation, over and above his Monism. Here he not only asserts the commingling of Divine and human spirits, but the actual appearance of God in the form of a visible, eating and drinking man.<sup>1</sup>

### *Doctrine of Unity*

Like Bayazid, Hallaj, too, propounds the unity of man with God. As we have seen, according to him, man is essentially divine, the image of God Himself. Hence he declared "Anal Haqq"—"I am the creative Truth or God"—for which he was cruelly done to death. "If ye do not recognise God," he says, "at least recognise His sign. I am the creative Truth (Anal' Haqq), because through the Truth I am a truth eternally." There can be no doubt that Hallaj himself believed in the essential divinity of man.

Later Sufis have, however, tried to interpret the formula in a different manner, thereby trying to extenuate Hallaj of the charge of heresy. Three main explanations have been offered—(1) Hallaj did not sin against the Truth, but against the Law, which forbids the divulgence of spiritual secrets to the mass. This great truth of the Unity of God and man ought not have been revealed to ordinary men, but reserved for the elect few. (2) Hallaj was not sober, but spoke

<sup>1</sup> According to Massignon, Hulul was not understood in this sense by Hallaj. According to Nicholson also, all that Hallaj means is that the personality in which the Eternal is immanent has itself a part in eternity. "Mystics of Islam", p. 154.

under the influence of ecstasy or intoxication. But a man should not be taken literally when he is not sober. Hujwiri, for example, puts up this defence. He was really united with a divine attribute, though he imagined that he was united with the divine essence.<sup>1</sup> (3) Hallaj simply meant to show that God, as an all-comprehending Unity, includes man, too, in Him. Man is in God, but not identical with God. It was God who was speaking through Hallaj when he said, "I am God" e.g. Rumi says: "No! No! for 'twas even He that was crying, in human shape 'Ana l-Haqq'. That one who mounted the scaffold was not Mansur, though the foolish imagined it." In fact, Hallaj asserts the transcendence of God, too, and the difference between God and man, (see below). Hence he cannot be properly characterized as a Pantheist.

### GOD

The supreme goal of man is to regain union with God. Man was projected out as an image out of God's essence, and as such, came to be infused with an element of Non-being. Hence the supreme task of man is to eliminate that element of Non-being and regain pure Being through a complete union with God,—the separated image should merge back again into the Essence imaged and become one with it. This absorption of the self in God, of the imaged essence into the Real Essence, is possible, to a certain extent, even in the present life, although it can be fully achieved only after death. From beginning to end, the whole process is like a closed circle: God going out to man, man again coming back to God. The unmanifest Absolute moves down to the sphere of manifestation, then again moves up back towards its unmanifest state. Hence the soul's spiritual progress towards God is nothing but God's upward movement towards His original state of Pure unmanifest Being.

Hence, the goal of the soul is to lose its separate humanity and be divine in essence. "A Sufi", says Hallaj, "is one who is single in essence." His essence is really the essence of God. He describes this state of absorption beautifully thus. "The butterfly, flies into the light and by its extinction becomes the very flame itself."

This annihilation of the human self qua self in the Divine self is the only goal of life. Everything else—asceticism, or spiritualism etc. is only a means to this end and not an end in itself. It is stated that,

1. See Part I, p. 6.

once Hallaj asked Ibrahim Khawwas: "During these forty years of your connection with Sufism, what have you gained from it?" Ibrahim replied: "I have made the doctrine of Trust in God peculiarly my own." Hallaj said, "you have wasted your life in cultivating your spiritual nature. What has become of annihilation in unification?"<sup>1</sup>

But although Hallaj insists on the identity and unity of God and man, still from the illustration given by him, it appears that according to him, human personality or essence somehow survives even in union. As quoted above, he describes the state of union as a commingling of wine and water. Now, when water is mixed with wine, it becomes one with and inseparable from it, but does not actually become wine. Even the charred butter-fly, in the example given above, does not become fire, but retains somehow its own individuality—it implies the sublimated personality of the saint united with God. Again, he says: "We are two spirits dwelling in one body." That, too, implies that man remains somehow different from God in essence, even when inextricably united with Him. Hence, divine and human natures, though commingled, are not absolutely identical in essence.

### *The Means*

**Self-control**:—The usual means are formulated. The subjugation of the lower self (nafs) is stressed. The nafs is the material element, the element of evil in man. It is the flesh that binds the spirit to the world, and prevents the union of the latter with the Supreme Spirit. The nafs is, often, represented as fox, a snake, a mouse etc. to signify its essentially material and obnoxious nature. The nafs of Hallaj, e.g., so the tradition goes, was found running behind him in the form of a dog.

**Gratitude**:—A saint should cultivate an attitude of utter humbleness and gratefulness. But at the same time, he should also realise the limit of his power of being sufficiently grateful, for no gratitude, however great, can ever equal what God has done for us. Hence the highest gratitude is to realise that human gratitude is futile. "O God," says Hallaj, "Thou knowest that I am not able to thank thee according to all thy bounties; wherefore, I pray Thee, thank Thyself for me."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hujwiri's 'Kashf' p. 205.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Kalabadhi's 'Kitab al Ta'arruf' p. 92.



At the highest stage, the distinction between benefit, benefitted and Benefactor disappears, and this alone is the highest gratitude or service rendered to God, for God wants man to return to Himself again as soon as possible, completing the circle. "Gratitude" says Hallaj, "consists in being unconscious of gratitude through the vision of the Benefactor."<sup>1</sup>

**Recollection, Concentration and Prayer** :—These are very important in leading the saints to the final goal. "By Concentration they are raised sublime from selfhood, as before the birth of time," says Hallaj.<sup>2</sup> Like other mystics, he stressed the absolute necessity of prayer—not the obligatory ritual prayer (salat) but free prayer (du'a), and loving converse with God (munajat). He used to pray all night, standing, and when some one said: "Be kind to yourself," he replied, "The kindly God has not been kind to me that I should have ease of it. Hast thou not heard that the Lord said: 'The most afflicted of men are the prophets, then the true believers?'"<sup>3</sup> The story goes that Hallaj used to perform four hundred bowings and prayers each day, and when asked as to why he took so much trouble, he replied: "Pain, and pleasure indicate your feelings, but those whose attributes are annihilated feel not the effect either of pleasure or of pain."<sup>4</sup>

**Dependence on God** :—This is illustrated by the following beautiful prayer of Hallaj—"Thy will be done, O my Lord and Master! Thy will be done, O my Purpose and Meaning. O Essence of my being, O Goal of my desire, O my Speech and my hints and my gestures! O all of my all, O my hearing and my sight! O my whole, and my particles!"<sup>5</sup>

**Obedience to God and Problem of Free Will** :—Hallaj insists that complete and unquestioning obedience to God is the prime duty of a man. In this connection, he recounts the story of Iblis, stated in the Qu'ran. After creating Adam, God commanded the Angels to worship Adam, but Iblis refused, pointing out that he, being made of fire, was higher than Adam, made only of clay. Therefore, God cursed him and threw him into Hell. Hallaj explains Iblis's disobedience by pointing out that he disobeyed God simply because he refused to recognise any other object of worship except One God. Hence Hallaj says :—"My friends and teachers are Iblis and Pharaoh. Iblis was threatened with

1 Op. cit. p. 91. 2 Op. cit. p. 115. 3 Op. cit. p. 150. 4 Quoted in Hujwiri's "Kashf" p. 303. 5 Op. cit. p. 259.

Hell-fire, yet he did not recant. Pharaoh was drowned in the sea, yet he did not recant, for he would not acknowledge anything between him and God. And I though I am killed and crucified and though my hands and feet are cut off—I do not recant."

But here, the question is: Although Iblis was right in refusing to worship anyone besides God, was he justified in disobeying God's express command? Hallaj replies: No, it was his duty to obey God at any cost. Now, here a difficulty arises. The very disobedience was due to God's will. God *commanded* him to worship Adam, but *willed* that he should refuse,—in this way Iblis tried to justify his disobedience. Hallaj, too, realises the bitterness of the dilemma—the impossibility of reconciling acts of sin and disobedience with predestination. He illustrated this by quoting a verse of Ibn Khallikan:—"God cast him into the sea, with his arms tied behind his back.

And said to him, 'Take care, take care, lest thou be wetted by water.' "

He tries to get rid of the difficulty thus: God's command is eternal, but His will is created. God commands only good, but wills both good and evil. Hence will is subordinate to command. So, His commands should be obeyed always. In fact, Hallaj inconsistently enough, sticks both to Pre-destination and Free Will. Our acts are all predestined by God, yet they are free acts. He is quoted as saying, "Whoever believes not in pre-destination is an infidel, and whoever says that it is impossible to disobey God is a sinner."<sup>1</sup> This is interpreted as meaning that pre-destination is not inconsistent with free will.<sup>2</sup>

**Gnosis:**—Through gnosis alone can man realise God directly. Hallaj ridicules intellect thus "O Wonder! how is he, who knoweth not how the hair of his body grows black or white, to know the creator of things " In another place he recounts the following allegorical story: "I saw a Sufi with two wings. He did not understand my business so long as he flew and asked me about purity. I said, 'Clip thy wings off by the scissors of self-annihilation, or else thou will not be able to follow me. But he rejoined: 'My wings I need to fly' One day he fell into the sea of understanding and was drowned." The following verse is attributed to him by Kalabadhi—

"Whoso seeks God, and takes the intellect for guide

God drives him forth, in vain distraction to abide.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Kalabadhi's "Ta'arruf" p. 32. <sup>2</sup> See below under Kalabadhi.

With wild confusion He confounds his inmost heart,  
 So that, distraught, he cries: 'I know not if thou art' "<sup>1</sup>  
 Gnosis is a Divine Gift. "He only knoweth God," he says, "Whom  
 God hath shown Himself."

**Ecstasy:**—Ecstasy brings the lover and the Beloved together, but this state of *fana* (self-annihilation) must be superseded by a still higher state—*fana of fana*, annihilation of annihilation, during which ecstasy itself is annihilated.<sup>2</sup> Hallaj says:—"I, too, found formerly delight in ecstasy, but woe is me.

Now here I was, now there, Then to my glee,  
 He granted me an attestation, free  
 Of all but the Attested: ecstasy  
 was swallowed up, and every memory  
 of visual form, in the one Unity."<sup>3</sup>

## V KALABADHI.

As pointed out above Kalabadhi is the author of the famous Arabic Sufi treatise "Ta'arruf" (Doctrine of Sufis) in which he collects the sayings of many great sufi teachers, and tries to prove that Sufism is wholly consistent with Orthodox Islam. This treatise was soon accepted as an authoritative work on Sufism, and several commentaries were written on it by eminent persons. The famous author Suhrawardī Maqtul (d 1191 A.D.) observes: "But for the Ta'arruf we should not have known Sufism." European scholars, too, attach a great importance to the work. It is held<sup>4</sup> to be "one of the eight books whose study is the foundation for history of Sufism, when that history comes to be written." The following account is based on this treatise.

### *Metaphysics*

#### God.

**His nature:**—God is one, alone, single, eternal, powerful, proud, ruler, merciful, living, hearing, seeing, enduring, speaking, desirous, creating, sustaining. God is absolutely distinct from the universe He has created. His essence, attributes and names are quite distinct from those of created beings. God has no body, shape, form, parts, particles,

1. 'Ta'arruf' p. 47.

2. See above p. 54.

3. Op. cit. p. 107.

4. By Nicholson, see Preface to 'Ta'arruf', P. XVIII.

elements, members or limbs. In Him, there is neither junction nor separation, neither movement nor rest, neither increase nor decrease. He is beyond all spatial and temporal limits, all faults and failings,—in short, no qualities and descriptions of created objects apply to Him. There is nothing like Him, and He is beyond all perception and thought.

**His attributes** :—God has real attributes wherewith He has qualified Himself, and which He possesses from all eternity.<sup>1</sup> These attributes are—knowledge, strength, power, might, mercy, wisdom, majesty, omnipotence, eternity, life, desire, will and speech. Besides these He has also hearing, sight, face and hand, which are His attributes,—but not limbs or parts. These attributes subsist through Him and are not separate from Him, yet they are neither God, nor other than God. In the same manner, amongst themselves also, they are neither diverse nor similar. E. G. His knowledge is not the same as His strength, nor other than His strength. His hearing is not the same as His sight, nor other than His sight and so on.

Kalabadhi does not explain here as to why an attribute of God is neither different nor non-different from Him, and from another attribute. But, evidently, he wants to avoid the following dilemmas :—

(1) First, if an attribute be different from God, then God ceases to be the only principle and His unity is jeopardised. Again, if an attribute be non-different from God, then there is no sense in calling it an attribute, and instead of saying "God is majestic," we should say: "God is God", which is a mere tautology. Further, on this view, there cannot be many attributes,—as God is one.

(2) Secondly, if an attribute be different from another attribute, then, in the above manner, God's unity is destroyed. Again, if an attribute be non-different from another attribute, then there is no sense in naming them separately.

This problem of the relation between divine Essence and attributes is one of the most disputed problems in Islamic philosophy, and, for the matter of that, in other philosophical systems of the world, no less.

In any case, according to Kalabadhi, God's attributes are unique and absolutely different from those of created beings. Hence, it is impossible for human beings to grasp them fully. God is, therefore, indescribable. In the end, God is described only by Himself, and all human descriptions of God are necessarily imperfect.

<sup>1</sup> "Ta'arruf" p. 14.

Here we note a distinction between Hallaj and Kalabadhi. According to Hallaj, God, in the very beginning, is attributeless, a pure Being or Essence, and later on attributes come to be manifested in Him, through His essence. Hence, though the Essence of God is uncreated, uncaused and eternal, His attributes are not so, though they are not due to any external cause—there being nothing besides God—but to His own essence. But according to Kalabadhi, the Essence and the attributes of God are equally eternal, uncreated and uncaused. "The Sufis are agreed", he says "that since eternity, He has not ceased to continue with His names and attributes."<sup>1</sup> Hence, God is always possessed of attributes. Kalabadhi points out that it is absurd to hold that any one of God's attributes is non-eternal, not present in Him from the very beginning, but coming to Him in time. For, first, that would imply a deficiency in God,—at first God is deficient, not possessing a particular attribute, then becomes complete through possessing it later on. But no want, imperfection or fault can ever subsist in the Perfect Being. Secondly, this would imply change, a passing from one state into another. But how is that possible on the part of an Eternal, Ever-existent Being? Hence, all the attributes of God are present in Him from the very beginning and will continue to be in Him eternally.<sup>2</sup>

**His acts:**—Hearing, seeing, desiring, creating, forgiving, and gratitude are generally called "acts" of God. But they are really God's attributes. No distinction is drawn between qualities that are acts, seeing, hearing, creating etc., and qualities which cannot be described as acts, such as greatness, splendour, knowledge, strength; for His acts are due to His will and will is His eternal attribute, and in this sense, His acts, too, are His attributes. Now, the attributes of God, which are not acts, like power, wisdom etc., are absolute, i.e., they can exist by themselves without reference to anything else. But His act-like attributes, like creating, ruling, forgiving etc. are relative, i.e. they cannot exist without referring to something else. Creating is meaningless without an object created, ruling without a ruled. Hence, if creating and ruling be eternal attributes of God, the created and ruled world, too, must be equally eternal. But this logical conclusion Kalabadhi refuses to accept, because if the world be co-eternal with God,

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<sup>1</sup> Op. cit p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Op. cit. p. 19.

then, according to him, God's unity will be marred. The world is created out of nothing by God, hence it is not eternal, but something having an origin in time. Hence, Kalabadhi concludes, inconsistently enough, that God is eternally creating and ruling, although the created and the ruled world is non-eternal. "He is without ceasing Ruler, God and Lord, without subject or slave. It is therefore, in the same way permissible to say that He is Creator, Maker and Former, without anything created made or formed."<sup>1</sup> Although our author himself leaves the matter and does not attempt to probe into the mystery deeply, perhaps the best explanation possible here is that God is only potentially, not actually, a Creator and a Ruler in reference to the world, yet to be created and ruled. The development or actualisation of a potential power or attribute to an actual one is not to be taken here as a sign of His imperfection, as it is due to His own free will; or as a sign of change, as the essential nature of God remains unchanged.

Whatever be the case, the act-like attributes, too, are held to be equally eternal like other attributes that are not acts.

Kalabadhi does not discuss here the central problem of Philosophy: Why has God created the world? He simply points out that God does not do things for any causes, for if they had a cause, then that cause would have a cause and so on ad infinitum. Hence, all His acts, like creating, favouring, rewarding, punishing etc. are causeless.

**His names:**—God's names, too, are eternal like His essence and attributes. Names, too, like attributes, are neither different nor non-different from God. Another view, however, is that the names of God are God.<sup>2</sup> It should be remembered that no names are to be applied to God that are not mentioned in the Qu'ran and the Traditions. E.G. we may call Him 'knowing', but not 'intelligent' or 'wise,' though they all mean the same thing; again, 'liberal', but not 'generous', and so on.<sup>3</sup>

**His speech**—As pointed out above, speech is an eternal attribute of God. The Qu'ran is the eternal speech of God, as such, neither created nor originated.<sup>4</sup>

#### *Source of Divine Knowledge*

God can be known indirectly in the present world through reason and revelation. 'Reason' implies deduction from evidences as found

1 "Ta'arruf" p. 20.

2 Op cit. p. 20.

3. Hujwiri's "Kashf" p 317.

4. Op cit p. 21.

in the world, 'revelation' implies faith in the Qu'ran. But there cannot be any direct knowledge of God here and now. 'Direct' knowledge implies perceptual knowledge. But no vision of God is possible on the part of human beings in the present world, but God can be seen with the eye in the next world. The following reasons are assigned by him for the impossibility of God's vision in the present world:—(1) Direct vision of the Lord is the sign of His greatest blessing and highest grace and hence it can occur only in the noblest place, viz. Paradise. (2) In such a noblest blessing could take place in the world, there would have been no difference between the non-eternal world and the eternal Paradise. (3) As God grants this supreme blessing to wise prophets He cannot do so to other less deserving persons. (4) The eternal God cannot be seen in a non-eternal world. (5) If God were directly seen here, people would have needed no instruction or explanation regarding Him, and their belief in Him would have been axiomatic. But it is not so.

The following reasons are assigned for the possibility of God's vision in the next world:—(1) The Qu'ran and the Traditions assert this. (2) God exists, and whatever exists may be seen. (3) The prayers of prophets and saints for a direct vision of God cannot be taken as evidences of ignorance and unbelief. They were praying for something which they believed to be attainable. (4) There is nothing to prevent God from showing Himself to the believers as an act of Grace,—on the contrary, it is consistent with His eternal mercy.

Kalabadhi is here specially careful to point out that not even the Sufis, some of whom claim to have seen God by the heart, i.e. in ecstasy, have really done so, or can do so. "God is not seen in this world," he concludes, "either with the eye, or with the heart, save from the point of view of faith."<sup>1</sup>

### *Doctrine of Predestination*

Just as God is the creator of the essences of creatures, so He is the creator of all their acts as well. Hence, although men are agents, they are not independent agents; on the contrary; all their acts are predestined by God. "All that they do," says Kalabadhi, "be it good or evil, is in accordance with God's decree, pre-destination, desire and will." Kalabadhi offers the following proofs for the doctrine of Pre-destination.

(1) Scriptural revelation asserts this. God says in the Qu'ran, which is His speech, "Say, God is the creator of everything." (Sura XIII, 17) Now, human acts, too, are things, and hence, God must be their creator, otherwise God would have been the creator of certain things only, not of everything, and His statement "Creator of everything" would have been false. But the exalted God cannot be a liar.

(2) The same conclusion is arrived at by reasoning no less. Men are admitted on all hands to be servants of God. But if men could act independently of God, they would not have been servants.

(3) Acts are more numerous than essences. So, if it be supposed that God creates human essences only, while human beings themselves create their own acts, then the conclusion is irresistible that man's act of creation is higher and more praiseworthy than God's act of creation. On this view, man becomes more powerful and skilful than God. But how can the servant rise above the Master in power and glory?

(4) Scripture not only asserts that God is the creator of everything, but also denies creatorship of anything to any one else. (e.g. Sura XIII, 17). Hence, man cannot be the creator of his own acts, but they are wholly predestined by God.

It may be asked: Why should God create evil acts? Kalabadhi does not attempt any logical explanation here, but relies wholly on Revelation. "Since it is possible, then for God to create an essence which is evil," says he, "it is also possible for Him to create an action which is evil."

Now, another equally difficult question is: How can we reconcile predestination with human responsibility? This is one of the most disputed of all philosophical questions throughout the ages. The difficulty is as follows:—If men are free agents, then God ceases to be the Absolute Master; but if men are not free agents, then they cannot, justly, be held responsible for their own acts, so that rewards and punishments become meaningless, and morality impossible. Morality implies free choosing between two or more alternatives, and so freedom of will is an essential postulate of moral judgment. How can we get rid of this dilemma?

Kalabadhi attempts the following solution:<sup>1</sup>—God has created all acts whatsoever—involuntary acts, like sudden trembling, as well as voluntary acts, like choosing between alternatives. But the difference between the two cases is that in the former case, God creates only the act, while in the latter case, He creates both the act and the free will.

(1) Op cit. p. 29



E.g.<sup>2</sup> when there is a sudden loud noise, a man jumps involuntarily. Here, God has created beforehand only the act of jumping. But, suppose, there is a purse lying on the pavement, a man sees it, hesitates whether to pick it up or not, then freely decides to pick it up and run away. Here, God has created the act of 'stealing' as well the free-will of the man to decide that course of action. This can only mean that from *God's standpoint*, the act of stealing is determined, as He has already chalked out that path for him. But from the *man's standpoint*, it is free, for he is conscious of hesitating, reflecting, desiring, and finally freely choosing that act of 'stealing' rather than another act of 'leaving' it there. He is here not conscious of any compulsion or force, but all the same, his final choice was pre-determined by God.

This Kalabadhi makes clear, again, under the discussion about the Doctrine of Compulsion.<sup>3</sup> What is the real meaning of the term 'Compulsion'? Compulsion, Kalabadhi points out, means, positively, that one is forced to do something which he does not himself prefer and which, otherwise, he would have left undone preferring its opposite; or, negatively, it means that one is forcibly prevented from doing a thing which one prefers and which, otherwise, he would have done rather than its opposite. E.g. a boy wants to play, but is forced by his father to read. Here, reading is not a free act but a forced one. But a free act is not such a compelled act. Suppose,<sup>1</sup> there is no one to force the boy to read, yet he chooses to read. Here, the act is a free act. But although free in this sense, it is yet determined by God in the sense that, it is due to a free choice, which itself has been created by God Himself. Thus, God does not directly compel us to do something against our *felt* wish to the contrary; He only implants in us certain desires and choices, from which, subsequently, acts follow spontaneously, without any felt compulsion or force.

This Kalabadhi, further, makes clear by the analysis of a voluntary act.<sup>2</sup> When we do something, first, we need some organs or limbs. Secondly, we must have a capacity to do that thing. Thirdly, we must have a desire to do it, and not its opposite. Now, all these condition of actions are wholly and solely determined by God alone. He creates the organs, He creates the capacity, He creates the desires, but then He stops, and lets the action follow its natural course spontaneously from these, without any further compulsion. In the case of a believer, e.g., our

(2) Illustration my own. The author does not give any illustration. (3) Op. cit. p 33.

(1) Illustration my own. (2) "Ta'arruf" pp 30E.

author points out, "He has created for him the choice, the approval and desire for faith, and the hatred, dislike and disapproval for disbelief. Hence, the believer chooses belief, likes it, approves of it, desires it, and prefers it to its opposite; while he dislikes unbelief, hates it, disapproves of it, does not desire it and prefers its opposite to it." Therefore, here there is no compulsion in his choice of belief and rejection of unbelief; and in that sense, it is a free, spontaneous act.

•To sum up, according to Kalabadhi, God does not directly compel men to do something, but only implants certain desires and impulses in them which lead to those acts of themselves. God creates free will, and from free will free acts follow. Therefore, *metaphysically*, God is the cause of actions, as actions are due to free will or choice which again is due to God Himself. But *psychologically*, men themselves are the causes of their actions, as they freely choose them to the exclusion of others. "We mean by 'free will', says Kalabadhi, 'that God has created in us free will, and therefore, there is no question of compulsion or of renunciation.'" In this way, he tries to reconcile Free Will with Determinism, human responsibility with God's supreme majesty.

### *His Doctrine of merit and demerit*

As men are free agents (in the above sense), they are responsible for their own actions, and acquire merit or demerit through them for which they may be rewarded or punished. Hence God has issued commands and prohibitions and announced rewards and punishments for them

The punishment for sin is Hell. Sins are of two kinds, major and minor.<sup>1</sup> Major sins are polytheism and infidelity. Some believe that the remission of minor sins may be secured through the avoidance of major sins, but others believe that both are equally punishable.

The reward of virtue is Heaven. The greatest virtue is an absolute faith in One God. Even "a mustard-grain of faith" may secure Heaven for one. Heaven and Hell are eternal, but created—having a beginning, but no end. Inhabitants of Heaven and Hell also reside there eternally blessed or punished, for ever, with a bliss that never ends, or a punishment that never ceases.

Here one thing should be taken into account. It has been said above that men are rewarded for their virtues, and punished for their sins. But as a matter of fact, they have no *claims* whatsoever to any rewards

1. Op. cit. p. 37

for their good deeds : There is no question of any claim or right or deserving here. What men get from God is not what *they deserve*, but simply what *He wills*.<sup>1</sup> The words 'claim', 'deserving' etc. imply as if we have a right to demand something from God because of our works, as if God is obliged or bound to do something in deference to our actions, as if we have laid Him under an obligation or debt which He must discharge faithfully by paying back our full dues. But, God, the supreme Master and Ruler, cannot, thus, be regarded as bound to men by any obligation whatsoever. Men are His petty servants, and a Master is never accountable to His servants. Hence, God does with His servants whatever He wishes and decrees for them however He desires, for the creation is His creation, and the command His command. Hence, the Qu'ran declares, "He shall not be questioned concerning what He does, but they shall be questioned." (Sura XXI 23). The relation between servant and master implies two things : (1) the master can do whatever he likes with his servant; (2) the servant cannot claim anything as his right from his master, otherwise there cannot be any difference between servant and master.

Hence, even if God, the Absolute Master, punishes all believers and rewards all unbelievers, He cannot be accused of injustice or wrong. In fact, such terms as 'unjust', 'wrong', 'foul' etc., are meaningless in God's case. 'Injustice' is a thing forbidden, and there is no commander over God to forbid Him anything. 'Wrong' is swerving from the path that has been set forth, and there is none to chalk out a path for God. Hence, God is never unjust in what He does, or wrong in what He decrees.

Should, we, then, say that the results of men's actions are absolutely uncertain, depending on the arbitrary will of God? The answer is that they do depend on the absolute will of God, and not on their own intrinsic merit and demerit, but still they are not absolutely uncertain. God *can* deal with men in whatever way He likes, yet He *does not*, He *can* punish the righteous and reward the sinner, but *does not*. He has promised rewards for virtues and threatened punishments for sins, and therefore, He always keeps His words, for He is not a liar. Thus, God has imposed upon Himself an obligation in the form of His own promise and threat, and that is why, He always rewards the good and punishes the bad.

Now, why should God, thus, promise rewards and threaten punishments? The reason, evidently, is the promotion of morality. In the

case of rewards, it is, further, due to God's generosity and goodness. God is altogether independent of men and can do whatever He likes with them. Still, out of His infinite goodness, He agrees to pay them for their good deeds, even more than their dues, and make them eternally happy. Thus, although actually virtue always brings its own rewards and vice its destruction, yet it should be clearly borne in mind "that reward and punishment are not a question of merit, but of God's will generosity and justice."<sup>1</sup> Whatever blessings God showers on men—kindness, health, security, faith, guidance, favour—are all mere condescensions on His part, and not in any way rewards which they can claim.<sup>2</sup> In fact, men are not the creditors and God the debtor here, but just the reverse. God can claim everything from men, but men can claim nothing in return from God. But still God is so generous that He Himself discharges the debt which men owe Him, and doubles the good work they do.<sup>3</sup> (cf. Sura IV 42).

By the above doctrine of merit and demerit, Kalabadhi tries to prove two things—God's absolute majesty and His infinite generosity. First God is the Supreme Ruler, therefore, He is not bound by any laws whatsoever, moral or religious, and therefore, not obliged to repay actions accordingly. Secondly, though He is not so bound, He freely rewards the good out of His own generosity. If God were obliged to reward goodness, then, did so, there would not have been any scope for any generosity there. But, God is not obliged to do so, yet does it—this specially shows His infinite mercy and goodness.

Kalabadhi's solution of the problem of Free will does not appear to stand the test of philosophical criticism. The sum and substance of his doctrine is that man *feels* himself to be a free agent, *therefore*, he is a free agent, hence he is responsible for his acts; and, so, finally, he deserves<sup>4</sup> rewards or punishments. But, however much a man may feel his acts to be free acts, God knows that they are not really so. These acts are due to certain impulses and desires, which in their turn are due to God Himself. So, how can a man be really judged by God for his acts, when He knows very well that such acts were really determined by Himself? To borrow the beautiful metaphor quoted by Hallaj,<sup>5</sup> if God casts a man into the sea with his hands tied behind, then how can He command him not to wet himself and punish him for disobeying the command? If God

1. Op. cit. p. 35. 2. Op. cit. pp. 35-39. 3. Op. cit. p. 32.

4. Really speaking, however, he does not deserve anything, as shown above.

5. See above, p. 8

simply created free will or the power of choosing between alternatives in man, and left the question there, letting him alone to exercise this powers and make the final choice, then alone his act could have been really free. But it is abundantly clear that by "free will", Kalabadhi does not mean this power of freely choosing between alternative courses of action, but the actual, final *choice*, which leads to the act immediately. Hence, the so-called "free will" in man is nothing but an entirely pre-determined course, right from the first deliberation and conflict of motives and desires down to the final choice and act. How, can such an act be called "free act" by any stretch of imagination?

His over-emphasis on God's arbitrary will seems to defeat its own purpose. It extols the supreme majesty of God, no doubt, but at the expense of His sense of justice, even generosity and goodness. Kalabadhi vehemently represents this as the view of all Sufis, and emphasises it again and again. "They are agreed," he says, "that acts are not a cause of happiness or unhappiness, but that, happiness and unhappiness are pre-destined and prescribed by the will of God" Again, "they are further agreed that acts do not determine reward or punishment in consideration of merit, but that reward and punishment accord with God's bounty and justice and God's determination. They are agreed that the bliss of Paradise belongs to those to whom happiness has been fore-ordained by God, without any cause and that the punishment of Hell belongs to those to whom unhappiness has been foreordained by God, without any cause."<sup>1</sup> One naturally wonders here what is that principle of justice and bounty which leads God to destine some to eternal bliss, and others to eternal suffering. In fact, the very nature of justice is that it produces a sense of obligation,—obligation to do what is right. Hence, if the supremely just God feels obliged to reward or punish acts according to their own nature, that is a sign neither of weakness, nor of servitude on His part,—but only of His very nature as an essentially just Being. E.g., a father feels obliged to look after the welfare of his children, and the children claim their father's love and protection as a *right*, and never beg it as a *favour*. But, that does not, in any way, indicate the father's inherent weakness. On the contrary, a father is a father because he feels so obliged without any external authority—it is his very nature to do so. In the same manner, it is the very nature of the Just God to take into account the nature of acts and deal with them accordingly. But Kalabadhi draws a line of demarcation between the nature of God and His

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1. "Taarruf" p. 44.

promise. *The nature of God* is that He can do any and everything arbitrarily, rewarding and punishing the good and the bad just as He likes; but *the promise of God* is that He will act justly, rewarding the good and punishing the bad only. But, if the very nature of God be admitted to be such that no arbitrary act is possible on His part, then that does not seem in way to minimise His greatness. Arbitrary will may be a sign of power, but it is a fault on the part a Just Being. So, just as all other faults are excluded from the supremely Perfect Being, so this fault too, must be so excluded. In fact, though arbitrary will may be a sign of power, it is not its *necessary* sign; and hence, nothing prevents a Being from being supremely powerful and supremely and scrupulously just at one and the same time. Hence, it is better to reject arbitrary will and retain both power and justice, than to retain arbitrary will and sacrifice justice. Further, from the moral standpoint too, a 'right' is healthier than a 'favour', 'deserving' than 'begging'.

### *Miracles and Marvels<sup>1</sup>*

*Prophets* are capable of miracles (Karamat), like, walking on water, talking with beasts, and travelling from one place to another, or producing an object from nothing or from something else, like water from sand, changing a rod into a snake and so on. But *saints* are capable of only marvels (mujizat), like an answer to prayer, completion of a spiritual state, the granting of power to perform an act, the supplying of means of subsistence etc. Finally, *enemies of God* are sometimes granted extraordinary powers, which finally, lead to their own destruction.

### ETHICS<sup>2</sup>

*Faith* :—Faith is the first requisite in the moral life. Faith must be both outward and inward, i.e., consist in act, speech, and heart, and such a faith alone is a complete one. But if faith be only inward, not outward, or conversely, that would be an incomplete faith. The elements of faith are four in number :—(1) Unlimited unification with God, (2) unlimited recollection of God, (3) possession of exalted states, and (4) ceaseless continuous ecstasy.

### *Rites and Rituals<sup>3</sup>*

Obligatory rites, like prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, and so on, must be performed by all to the best of their capacities. Further, earnings from

1. Op. cit. p. 57. 2. Op. cit. p. 67. 3. Op. cit. p. 72.

trade, commerce or agriculture are permissible, provided they are consistent with religious laws and used for charitable purposes or support of dependents.

### *Essential Duties of a Sufi<sup>1</sup>*

These are ten in number, viz. belief in one God, understanding things in the light of mystical experience and not merely in the light of book-learning, good fellowship, eagerness to teach spiritual ways to others, yielding up of personal choice, swiftness of ecstasy, constant examination of thoughts that arise in the mind, abundant journeying for the purpose of beholding the warnings of God, yielding up of earning and refusal to hoard.

### *Various states of the Sufis<sup>2</sup>*

Here our author illustrates the various 'states' of a Sufi by means of quotations from various Sufi teachers.<sup>3</sup>

(1) *Repentance* :—To begin with, it implies, not forgetting one's own sins. In a higher stage, it implies, forgetting one's own sins completely (Junayd), when all sins are completely wiped away from the conscience. Repentance should be absolutely sincere, otherwise this very act of repentance should be repented for its little sincerity. Finally, it involves turning to God all the time, just as before one turned away from Him all the time.

(2) *Abstinence* :—Negatively, it implies the total absence of all desire for wordly objects and all possessions of these. Positively, it implies giving away what one possesses, restoring what rightfully belongs to others, and being attached to God alone. To real saints abstinence counts nothing, for they do not feel any necessity for exercising abstinence with regard to a world that weighs less than a gnats' wing to them. (cf. Shibli and Wasiti)

(3) *Patience* :—In a lower stage, patience implies bearing distresses and disappointments with fortitude, expecting consolation from God. But in a higher stage, it implies calmly embracing all hardships consequent on obeying God's commands, not even expecting, in return, any consolation from God.

1. Op. cit, p 73

2. For explanation, see under Hujwiri.

3. He has given only a number of isolated quotations, without indicating his own view. Some of these quotations are here summarised and made consistent as far as possible. It is difficult to find out, in all cases, what exactly is the author's own view.

(4) *Poverty* :—It implies “non-existence of every existent thing and abandonment of every lost thing.” A poor man is one who has given up all worldly possessions and asks for nothing, not even for the means of sustenance, unless he fears that he will not be able to carry on religious duties.

(5) *Humility* :—It is the abasement of the heart to God, being well pleased with Him, accepting the truth from Him, shouldering the burdens of the people of religion.

(6) *Fear* :—It should be, first, directed towards one's own self, i.e. the lower, animal self, the greatest obstacle to spiritual development. Secondly, it should be directed to God, for an altogether different reason. In this case, fear is due to reverence for God, and not for any selfish motives. In the higher stage, however, fear gives place to hope, and the saint fears no other than God, but hopes for God alone.

(7) *Piety* :—It implies leaving everything except God, having repose in Him and finding pleasure in Him alone.

(8) *Sincerity* :—It means working only out of regard for God, not expecting anything from the act, not even considering the act itself, i.e. turning from the act to God, so that the act may not occasion any pride in us, e.g. when we are obedient to God, we must not even think of *our* obedience, but only of God.

(9) *Gratitude* :—It means acknowledging the Benefactor and confessing His Lordship. Gratitude itself is a gift of God, hence we should be grateful for our own gratitude, then be grateful for that gratitude, again, and so on without end. Hence, man can never be sufficiently grateful to God.

(10) *Trust* :—It stands for believing that there is no power or strength save in God, abandoning every refuge except Him, and being at ease before Him. Real trust is the abandonment of trust, i.e. taking God as related to one as He was when one was not yet brought into being.

(11) *Satisfaction* :—It means relinquishing free-will, anticipating God's decrees with joy, regarding Him as our best Benefactor.

(12) *Certainty* :—It is the removal of doubt, lifting up of the veil of the unseen, not through ordinary perception or book-learning, but through the mystical revelation of the heart. Hence it is called ‘the eye of the heart.’

(13) *Recollection* :—Real recollection consists in forgetting all but the One recollected. It has three stages :—(a) Recollection of the heart,



i.e. recollecting the One previously forgotten, but now remembered. (b) Recollection of the qualities of the One remembered. (c) Contemplation of the One remembered, and the passing away from recollection itself, for the recollection of the qualities of the One causes the disappearance of the qualities of the kaint, so that he passes away from recollection.

(14) *Intimacy* :—It implies, negatively, estrangement from one's own self; and, positively, love for God alone. It is the removal of nervousness, boldness with the Beloved and heart's joy in Him.

(15) *Nearness* :—This means that we see only the acts and bounties of God, and not our own acts, or endeavours; or that, we do not consider ourselves real agents, but God as the only agent. It implies both presumption,—as a lover is presumptuous towards his beloved,—and submission.

(16) *Gnosis* :—It is the divinely granted direct experience of God through which alone can He be known—the only guide to God is God Himself. God is at once the subject and the object of gnosis, i.e. during gnosis, the distinction between knowledge, knower and known disappears. A distinction is drawn between *gnosis*, *knowledge* and *intellect*. Intellect is established by knowledge, knowledge by gnosis, but gnosis by its own essence. That is, God reveals Himself to a man and causes him to have *gnosis* of Him; then, He originates a *knowledge* in Him, so that he attains knowledge through gnosis; then finally, his *intellect* works according to the knowledge God has thus originated. Knowledge is the examination of the outwards aspect of things, and gnosis is the examination of them with the revelation of their inward aspect. God has reserved gnosis for His saints, but He has made knowledge free to all believers. A few, however, regard knowledge as superior to gnosis, by holding that gnosis is the knowledge of God before the experience of Him, but knowledge is that of God after experiencing Him. All agree, however, in holding that intellect cannot be a guide to God. It is a created thing and as such, cannot lead us to the Uncreated. It helps us in ordinary knowledge and acts only,—“it goes about creation, but when, it beholds the creator, it dissolves.”

There are two kinds of Gnosis—of self-revelation and of instruction. The first means that God causes men to know Him and to know things through Him. The second means that He shows them the effects of His power and implants in them a special grace, so that material things indicate to them that there is a Maker. The former is the gnosis of the elect, the latter of other believers.

(17) *Union* :—Union means being inwardly separated from all but God, seeing inwardly none but God, and listening to none but God. Kalabadhi definitely rejects the view that union with God means the annihilation of the soul in Him or non-difference between the two. The state of union, described by a Sufi thus : "Union is when conscience arrives at the station of oblivion," is explained by our author as indicating only that during that state of union, veneration for God completely eclipses veneration for aught else. The relation between God and man is always that between Master and servant, and hence union can never imply complete identity between the two, but it simply implies that the servant witnesses none but his Creator and thinks of none else but his Maker.

(18) *Lore* :—It means, first, that the heart inclines to God alone and what is of God, without any effort, and does not incline to anything else. Hence, it is said that love renders one blind and deaf to anything else besides God. Then, again, it is obedience to God's commands, refraining from what He forbids, and satisfaction with what He has ordained. Our author is careful to point out here also that love does not make the soul lose its selfhood in God, for the two are ever different. He explains the passage, "Love is an annihilation if it be for the creator" by pointing out that the word 'annihilation' simply means that no personal interest remains, that such a love has no cause, and that the lover does not persist through any cause. There are two kinds of love—love of confession which belongs to the elect and common alike, and love of ecstasy in the sense of attainment. In the latter case, there is total absorption in the consideration of God, and no other consideration of self or other creatures remains.

#### *Several 'Technical States' of the Sufis*

Kalabadhi points out that there are certain technical expressions used by Sufis, but not by others. So here he explains the meanings of these states, taking care to point out that he will indicate only the meanings of the words, not their actual experience which cannot be expressed by words or explained.

(1) *Detachment and Separation* :—*Detachment* implies that outwardly one must not take anything of the world, and inwardly one must not seek any compensation for what he has thus renounced, but should do one's duties towards God simply for duty's sake and not from any other motive. It, further, implies that one must not be attached to any 'state' or 'station' in which one lodges from time to time.

*Separation* means that one should separate oneself from anything else, and one's actions should be wholly unto God, without any thought of self, respect for persons, regard for compensations. Further, one should be separated from the 'states', be absorbed in the vision of God alone, and be quite indifferent to his fellow beings, neither associating with them nor seeking to be estranged from them. The difference between *detachment* and *separation* is that "detachment means that one does not possess, separation means that one is not possessed."

(2) *Ecstasy* :—"It is the hearing and the sight of the heart." It is a sensation that encounters the heart, whether it be of fear, grief, the vision of some fact in future life, or revelation of some state between man and God. If a man's ecstasy is weak, then he exhibits it; but if it be strong, he controls it and is passive. "Ecstasy is the glad tidings sent by God to the mystic of his promotion to the stations of His contemplation."

(3) *Over-mastery* :—It is a state experienced by the mystic during which he is incapable of intelligent thought or proper action and may even do something which is wrong. After a time, however, he becomes normal. The overmastering forces may be of fear, awe, reverence, shame and so on, e.g. through fear, one may tie himself to a pillar of the mosque. Overmastery is a genuine state of the soul, and a man who is under this state is to be forgiven for offences for which he would have been punished, if sober. Some saints, however, remain quiet, even when in this state, and their states are more perfect.

(4) *Intoxication* :—Under this state, a man is not wholly unconscious, still he fails to distinguish between things and between pleasure and pain, wealth and poverty and so on. This state is the result of his being overmastered by a sense of God's being, or of what he owes to God, like patience and gratitude. So, to him, gold and clay, pleasure and pain appear just the same. This state of intoxication is to be distinguished from the state of spiritual soberness. In the latter case, a man can discriminate between what is pleasurable and what is painful, but deliberately chooses the later if it be in accordance with God's will, still feels no pain, but rather pleasure, in his painful experience. This state of sobriety is better than that of intoxication,—for a man who is under the state of intoxication may fall into something hateful, yet have no feeling of repulsion for it, which he ought properly to have. But a sober man, consciously chooses pain, yet finds pleasure in it, because he is overwhelmed by the presence of God who cause pain. Thus,

according to our author, intoxication, too, does not involve any absorption of the self in God, but only insensibility to ordinary experiences of pleasure and pain; and sobriety is to be preferred to intoxication.

(5) *Absence and presence* :—*Absence* means that a man is unconscious of his own passions. These passions are present in him, but still he is unconscious of them, because he is absent from them and present with God. *Presence* means that a man regards his passions as belonging to God, and not to himself. Hence, whatever passions he indulges in, he does so in the spirit of servanthood, and not for pleasure.

(6) *Concentration and Separation* :—The first stage of *concentration* is to concentrate on a single resolve—this is the stage of endeavour and discipline. Concentration proper, however, is a spiritual state,—implying fixing attention on God alone. *Separation* follows concentration and involves separation from the mystic's resolves, from desires for pleasure, from himself and his own acts.

(7) *Revelation and Veiling* :—There are three kinds of revelation :—of essence, of qualities of essence, and of the condition of essence. The first does not mean that God is actually seen in this world, but it simply refers to a state of overmastery when the mystic feels the overpowering presence of God, and to the visual revealing in the next world. The second implies the revelation of God's power and sufficiency to a man, so that he fears God and hopes for God alone, respectively. The third implies the revelation in the next world, in Heaven or Hell. *Veiling* follows revelation and involves the veiling of all other things from the saint. When a man is absorbed in God's revelation to him, naturally he takes no note of any other thing besides Him.

(8) *Passing-away and Persistence* :—*Passing away* is a state in which all passions pass away, so that the mystic has no feelings whatsoever for anything on earth, and loses all sense of discrimination. In this way, he passes away from all things and is absorbed in God alone. God, in His turn, takes him under His control, and guides him in such a manner that he does his duties towards God and obeys Him, and is free from all thoughts of personal interest. *Persistence* follows passing-away. It means that the mystic passes away from what belongs to his own self and persists through what belongs to God. *Persistence* signifies that whatever he does, he does for God, and not for his own sake. Our author is here careful to point out that the Sufi statement : "He passes away from his own attributes and persists in the attributes of God," does not mean any identity between God and man in essence or attributes, but

it simply means that he passes away from his own feelings, as all personal feelings and desires for personal advantages have ceased in Him; and persists in the feelings of another, viz. God, as his every motion is in accord with God's wishes. Or, passing-away means passing away from the very consciousness of disaccord with God, and persisting means persisting in accord with God. Passing away means the passing away of human qualities of ignorance, injustice, ingratitude etc., and persistence means the persistence of faith. Or, passing away and persistence may mean that during the mystical moment, the mystic is not conscious of anything,—neither of passing-away nor of persistence; but it is God who knows these and preserves him from every blameworthy act.

Here Kalabadhi hazards the important conjecture that all these terms—union, detachment and separation, intoxication and sobriety, absence and presence, concentration, passing away and persistence—are really synonyms. The mystic passes away from what belongs to him; and persists in what belongs to God. When he passes away, he is also concentrated, he is separated, for he does not witness himself or his fellows. He is also absent and intoxicated, because he loses the power of discrimination, and in this sense, all things become one to him. He persists because He abides with God who Himself makes him concentrate on Himself.

This state of passing away is a permanent one, because it is not the result of one's own effort, but purely a gift from the Lord, and God cannot take back what He has once given. A mystic who has passed away never neglects his duties towards God. Such a man is not in a swoon, or mad, and his human qualities also do not disappear and so he does not become an angel or a spirit. He only passes away from his own personal feelings.

Men who pass away may be of two kinds. First, those who cannot stand as leaders or models. These lose all sense of discrimination between pleasure and pain, and hence appear to be mad. Secondly, those who may be leaders, guiding and instructing their followers.

(9) *Unification*—It has seven elements:—isolation of the eternal from the temporal; the exalting of the Eternal above the perception of the created; giving up equating the attributes; abolishing the principle of causation from the attributes of the Lord; taking God as beyond all temporal changes; exalting Him above all consideration; and taking Him to be free from the principle of analogy i.e. not similar to anything on

earth. Thus the sum and substance of unification is rather, paradoxically, to realise the eternal difference between God and man.

(10) *The Seeker and the Sought* :—The seeker is really the Sought, and Sought the seeker,—for a man who seeks God does so only because God has first sought him and granted him, as a gift, this tendency to seeking. The cause of everything is God's act, hence the seeking of a man, too, is due to God's act of making him seek.

### *Divine Favour to the Sufis*

God favours saints by various means, viz. supernatural voice, gift of insight, thought, visions, rare favours, laying hardships on them to bear, and many other graces, accorded here and hereafter.

It is sufficiently clear from the above account that Kalabadhi tries to represent Sufism in an entirely orthodox light, and it is doubtful whether all Sufis will accept this very moderate and restrained form as representing their true views, specially his doctrine of '*Fana*' and '*Baqa*'—passing-away and persistence. '*Fana*' or *passing away*, according to him, simply means complete detachment from the world, and nothing more. There is absolutely no question of any annihilation of the self of the mystic. He persists as a separate individual, having all his human qualities; only he is not bound up to his self or to the world by ties of desires and passions. Pleasure and pain, wealth and poverty, gold and clay are the same to him,—the entire world means nothing to him. Hence, although, he is *in* the world, he is not *of* the world. Therefore, he has passed away from the world. Again, '*baqa*', according to him, means persisting through a complete obedience to God. Here, also, there is absolutely, no question of any identity between divine and human essences or qualities. A man is ever distinct from God, and can never become even similar to Him, either in essence or in quality,—not to speak of being identical with Him. Thus, '*fana*' means annihilation of selfish and worldly desires,—detachment from the world; and '*baqa*', means complete subjugation to the Divine will—attachment to the Lord.

Gnosis, ecstasy, intoxication, love—all mean only this much, nothing more.

### VI. HÜJWIRI

The following account is based on his '*Kashf Al-Mahjub*' ('Revelation of the Mystic'), the most celebrated Persian treatise on Sufism.

*Epistemology.*<sup>1</sup>

Knowledge is a quality whereby "the ignorant are made wise". Knowledge is an essential duty of every one. Knowledge, however, is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. It must enable us to attain a practical end. Mere theoretical knowledge is of no use at all. Hence knowledge must be combined with action. These are really inseparable like sun and sunlight.<sup>2</sup> Both are equally necessary. Action must be based on knowledge, otherwise, it is wrong. Knowledge must lead to action, otherwise it is barren. A man must practise and preach what he knows and believes, for theory without practice is like a body without a soul. The highest value of knowledge is that it, when combined with proper action, leads to God.

There are two kinds of knowledge, divine and human. God's knowledge is an attribute of God, who has infinite qualities; while man's knowledge is an attribute of men, possessing finite attributes. God's knowledge is indivisible and inseparable from Him and consists in the knowledge of all things, existent or non-existent. He does not share it with man. The proofs of His knowledge are His actions. From His actions that we see we can infer His omniscience.

Human knowledge is of two kinds—knowledge of Truth (*Haqiqat*) and knowledge of Law (*Shari'at*). Each has three forms. The three forms of the first are—Knowledge of the essence and unity of God, knowledge of the attributes of God, and knowledge of the actions and wisdom of God. The three forms of the second are—The Qu'ran, the Sunna (Traditions) and the Consensus of the Moslem community. Knowledge of Divine Essence means knowing that God is the Creator and Sustainer of all things, quite different from 'creatures'; that He is infinite, beyond evils, and existent externally by His own essence. Knowledge of Divine Attributes means knowing that God has attributes that exist in Him and subsist by Him, but are neither identical with Him nor different from Him<sup>3</sup>, nor His parts, because God's unity does not admit of difference and number. These attributes are knowledge, power, life, will, hearing, sight, speech etc. Knowledge of Divine Acts is knowing that God is the Creator of everything, of all human actions, good and evil, of all that is beneficial or injurious. Knowledge of Law means knowing that the Apostles are true messengers of God so that what the Prophet Muhammad has told man about God and the world is perfectly true.

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1. "Kasf" p 11ff. 2. Op. cit. p 95 3 See under Kalabadhi p. 10 above.

Some have classified human knowledge into three kinds—from God, with God, and of God. The first is called the Science of Gnosis (*ilm-e-marifat*) through which God is directly known to His Prophets and Saints only. Such a knowledge cannot be attained by ordinary means, but only through Divine grace and guidance. The second is the Science of Sacred Law (*ilm-e-shari'at*), open and obligatory to all. The third is the Science of the Path and the Stations and degrees of Saints. All these are inter-connected. Gnosis is unsound if it be inconsistent with the Law, and Law is not practised correctly if stations are not manifested.

Knowledge has been defined as the removal of the veil of ignorance. Now, there are two kinds of veil—veil of covering which can never be removed, and veil of clouding which can be removed quickly. In the former case, a man is veiled from the Truth by his very essence, so that he fails to distinguish between truth and falsehood. Now, as the essence of a thing never changes, such a man is ever barred from knowledge. In the latter case, however, a man is veiled from the truth by his attributes merely, so that his nature and heart continually seek the Truth and avoid falsehood. Now, as an attribute may change, such a man can have knowledge later on through revelation, proper instruction and reasoning. But although all are not entitled to spiritual knowledge, Universal Scepticism, as held by some, is an altogether unsound theory. This view asserts that nothing can be known by anyone. Now, this position involves an inherent self-contradiction. If the sceptic asserts; "I know that knowledge is impossible," then he himself proves the possibility of knowledge; again, if he denies this knowledge, then his own position is false. However, the limits of human knowledge, too, should be borne in mind. "True perception" as the poet has sung: "is to despair of attaining perception"—not meaning that no knowledge is at all possible, but simply that human knowledge is necessarily imperfect.

### *Sufism*<sup>1</sup>

Sufism really requires no rigid definition, for a Sufi is at once known from his acts. Further, Sufism is too exalted to have a genus from which it may be derived. Still, generally speaking, Sufism may be said to rest mainly on the double pillars of purity and poverty, so that one who wants to be a Sufi needs climb up through these narrow pillars.

1 "Kashf" p. 34 etc.



In fact, the path to Sufism is essentially a Path of action—it is not only knowing, but also doing. Hence some said that “Sufism consists entirely of behaviour,”—i.e. acting properly at every time, in every place and under every circumstance. According to Junayd, “Sufism is founded on eight qualities exemplified in the eight Apostles—the generosity of Abraham, the acquiescence of Ishmael, the patience of Job, the symbolism of Zacharias, the strangerhood of John, the pilgrimhood of Jesus, the wearing of wool by Moses and the poverty of Muhammad.” But Sufism is not mere formalism or ceremonialism, but it is morals, i.e., it consists only in sincere and unselfish action. Hence, Sufism is described as “good nature.” A Sufi is a good-natured man—good to God, to man and to self. He is good to God by obeying His commands; good to man by being respectful, kind and just to them; good to self by not following the flesh and the devil.

There are three kinds of followers of the creed of Sufism :—

(1) The Sufi is one who has escaped the bondage of human attributes and is, thus, dead to self; but who has attained God and is living by the Truth.

(2) The *Mutasawwif*, i.e. one who is really striving to become a Sufi by honestly following the Path laid down by him.

(3) The *Mustaswif*, i.e. one who is trying to appear like a Sufi for the sake of worldly advantages, but really neither possesses any qualifications, nor tries to attain any. The first is a man of Union, who has traversed the Mystic Path, has escaped from the captivity of the ‘station and impurity of the ‘states’, and has reached his goal, viz. union with God. The second is a man of principle, who is yet on the Path, firm on the ‘states’. The third is a man of superfluities, who fails to enter the very Path to Truth, and as such is entirely despicable.

### *Initiation to Sufism*

An aspirant to Sufism is to be initiated to it by a teacher or a Sufi *Shaykh*. When a novice approaches a teacher with the intention of renouncing the world, the teacher, in order to test his fitness for the Mystic Path, subjects him to spiritual discipline for three years. In the first year, the aspirant must devote himself to the service of humanity, by serving all alike like a servant. The second year is to be devoted to the service of God, by worshipping Him for His own sake only. The third year is to be devoted to watching over his own heart. If he is successful in this three-fold discipline, then alone can he be admitted

to the Path by the teacher and is invested with the patched frock (Muragga'at).

The teacher who undertakes to initiate a novice and show him the Path to Union with God, must himself be a fit person to do so. Any and every one cannot be a teacher, as leading others along the spiritual path is a most difficult job, second only to the act of himself traversing the Path and reaching the goal. The teacher must be a "man of rectitude, who has traversed all the hills and dales of the Path, tasted the rapture of the states, perceived the nature of actions; and experienced the severity of Divine Majesty as well as the clemency of Divine Beauty,"—for unless a man directly experiences something, he cannot properly teach that thing to others. The teacher must also be able to know the fitness and capacity of his disciples for different stages,—whether they will retire, or stand still or attain—and advise them accordingly. Finally, the teacher must also possess supreme mystical powers, so that he may turn strangers to friends, sinners to saints.

The disciple, too, must possess certain qualifications. He must renounce all pleasures, suppress all passions, and devote himself entirely to the service of God. The patched frock should inculcate in him corresponding qualities, allegorically represented by its different parts thus:—"Its Collar is annihilation of intercourse with men, its two sleeves are observance and continence, its two gussets are poverty and purity, its belt is persistence in contemplation, its hem is tranquillity in God's presence and its fringe is settlement in the abode of union." He must not voluntarily renounce the frock under any circumstance whatsoever.

### *Path of Purity and Poverty*

*Poverty*:—It occupies a very high place in the Path. It implies renouncing all things, external and internal (i.e. even desires for possession). Its form is destitution and indigence, but its essence is fortune and free choice. Those who know its essence freely give up all possessions and turn to God as the only fortune worth having. Outwardly or in form, the poor are destitutes; but inwardly or in essence, they are the richest of all, possessing God.

A question may be asked as to whether, as a human attribute, wealth or poverty is superior. Some say that wealth is superior, for poverty is a human attribute merely, while wealth is an attribute common to both God and man. But really speaking, wealth belongs only to God, poverty only to man. No man is really wealthy in the sense God is wealthy,

for human wealth is phenomenal and changing, dependent on various causes. But Divine wealth is not due to any causes but is permanent, and consists in His independence and absolute power. Some again maintain the superiority of wealth on the ground that at the Resurrection God will call the wealthy to account and reproach them and this reproach is addressed by the Beloved to the lover, so that they, and not the poor, will hear God's words as His lovers. But in true love, there is no possibility of reproach, for the Beloved does not require any expiation from the lover and the lover also does not neglect to obey the Beloved. The fact is that from the lower empirical standpoint, poverty is superior to wealth, as it is an essential discipline in the Journey towards the goal. But from the higher transcendental standpoint when the heart is cleared of all except God, the antithesis between the two disappears, and neither is better than the other, but both become the same to one who has grown absolutely indifferent to the world.

A question may, further, be asked whether poverty or purity is superior. Some hold that poverty is superior, because it is complete annihilation, when all thought ceases; while purity is only one of the 'stations'. Others hold just the opposite view, that purity is annihilation, while poverty is subsistence, hence the former is superior to the latter. It is, however, mainly a matter of words, as these ideas are really inexpressible.

Some Sufis follow the Path of Blame (Malamat). This implies that they purposely court dishonour and ridicule of their fellow-beings by violating social codes and conventions. The greatest veil between God and man is self-conceit, and self-conceit can be removed more quickly by the disapproval of one's fellow-beings than by anything else. Hence it has been said that the blame of mankind is the food of the friends of God, as it is a token of Divine approval. Now there are three kinds of blame, resulting from following the right path, from an intentional act, or from the violation of the law. In the first case, a man mends his own business, properly performs his religious duties and acts of devotion, still is blamed by his fellowmen because he does not seek favour with them, refrains from ostentation and acting hypocritically. In the second case, a man purposely incurs blame and resigns honour, so that his self-conceit may not get the upper hand and he might be left in peace to think of God alone. In the third case, a man, under the pretence of following the above-mentioned Path of Blame, violates the law and commits sin for the sake of self-indulgence only. It goes without saying that the first two only are real followers of the Path of Blame, not the last.

Now a question may be asked as to whether the Path of Blame is really necessary for or essential to spiritual progress. Huzwiri points out that on many occasions it does help an aspirant in his spiritual struggles—the more is he scoffed at and derided, the happier does he become, because he draws nearer to God. This our author asserts from his personal experience. But he is also careful to point out that the act of seeking blame is often a mere ostentation and hypocrisy; and what is worse, instead of bringing a man nearer God, produces just the opposite result. For, such a man has his thoughts fixed on mankind, not on God. The time he spends in thinking of his fellow-beings and planning to incur their wrath might have well been better spent in the contemplation of God Himself. If he wants to make people grow indifferent to him, the best plan would be to grow indifferent to them and to his own self, so that they count nothing to him at all. "If you wish no one to see you, do not see yourself." So, to those who are really indifferent to the world, praise and blame count the same.

### Metaphysics

**Discourses on Various Doctrines:**—Hujwiri expounds and discusses the views of twelve Sufi sects, and in this connection, his own views on various subjects. The main of these are noticed here.

**Distinction between "States and "Stations":**—"Station" (maqam) means a stage in the Mystic Path through which one approaches God. A man begins with a station, attains perfection in it and then rises to a higher station, not before that. Thus, the first station is repentance, then conversion, then renunciation, then trust in God and so on. "State" means that which descends on a man from God, and which, therefore, he can neither keep when it disappears, nor shake off when it appears. That is, it is altogether beyond the reach of human effort, but is merely the result of God's grace, pure and simple. A man acquires a station by his own hard labour and the merit he acquires therefrom, but he attains a state without any such effort or exertion. "Station belongs to the category of acts, state to the category of gifts." A man in a station stands by self-mortification, a man in a state is dead to self and stands by the state granted by God.

**Satisfaction:**—It is of two kinds—Divine and human. The first means that God bestows grace on man. The second means that man obeys the commands of God. The first precedes the second, for, this

obedience itself is a gift of God. Ordinarily satisfaction is taken as a "station", though some hold that it is a "state." The fact is that it is the end of the stations and the beginning of the states, the end of toil and the beginning of grace. So it may be called both a state and a station.

### **Annihilation (fana) and Subsistence (baqa)**

These terms have different meanings in science and in mysticism. From the scientific standpoint, there are three kinds of subsistence—viz. one that is without beginning and without end, viz. God and His attributes; one that has a beginning, but no end, viz. Heaven and Hell; and one that has both a beginning and an end, viz. the world. Hence, here knowledge of annihilation means knowing that the present world is perishable, and knowledge of subsistence means knowing that the next world is everlasting. In the same manner, there may be subsistence and annihilation of ordinary states like ignorance, etc. Here, when there is the annihilation of ignorance, sin, forgetfulness etc. there is simultaneously the subsistence of knowledge, piety, remembrance etc. respectively.

But Sufis take the terms differently. To them, they imply the end of their journey to God. They have now escaped from the prison of "stations" and vicissitudes of "states", and are annihilated from the world and subsistent in God. Here "annihilation" does not mean the absorption of the self in God, or the destruction of essence and personality,—for the self is a substance, and a substance cannot thus disappear or be annihilated in something else. It simply means the consciousness of the imperfection of the self itself and the world, complete detachment to itself and the world, and the consequent annihilation of its human attributes only which contaminate the essence, and not of its essence itself. Thus, such a man has undergone all worldly experiences, found out their imperfections, grown disgusted with them and has finally become absolutely indifferent to them. Hence, he is dead to the self, dead to the world. Consequently, all his own human attributes, like attachment, choice, desiring a thing, striving for it, foresight, self-dependence, associating with the world, being joyful, being disappointed and so on, disappear from him completely. The fact is that all these human attributes are attributes in relation to the world, and so if the world ceases to have any meaning for him, the

corresponding attributes, too, cease simultaneously. E.g. if the subject of desire ceases, the attributes of desiring and striving, too, do so. Thus, annihilation means the cessation of all worldly attributes, activities, functions, through the growth of detachment. It does not imply the disappearance of man as such—it does not imply that the very essence of man evaporates, that he ceases to be a man and becomes nothing,—a non-entity, or an entity merged into another,—for, man remains a man and in the world, but only loses all worldly qualities and activities, as shown above. That is why, though still a man, he is beyond all human descriptions—"he is neither near nor far, neither stranger nor intimate, neither sober nor intoxicated, neither separated nor united; he has no name, or sign or brand or mark."

Secondly, "subsistence" does not imply the subsistence of *God in man*. Hujwiri says: "Some wrongly imply that annihilation means loss of essence and destruction of personality; and that subsistence indicates the subsistence of God in man. Both these notions are absurd." That is, "subsistence" does not mean that God actually descends in man and shares his qualities, thus becoming commingled and linked with him. There cannot be any such commixture of and identity between what is Eternal and Uncreated and what is phenomenal and created. Hence, "Subsistence" means only subsistence of *man in God*. That is, when a man's human attributes, or independent will and effort, are annihilated, he comes to subsist through the will of God alone and is completely controlled by Him. In short, annihilation and subsistence imply that, in union, the mystic ceases to be an independent and self-dependent being (annihilation) and is transformed into a God-controlled being (subsistence). Here the ascription of God's acts to man (i.e. acts wholly predestined and controlled by God) ends (annihilation), and the ascription of man's acts to God begins (subsistence). Hujwiri illustrates this by the example of fire and iron. When iron is united with (thrown into) fire, fire cannot change the substance or essence of iron, for iron can never become fire; but it changes only the attributes of iron (such as, solidity, coldness etc.) and transmits its own qualities to it (such as heat, light etc.) In the same manner, when a man is united with God, his personality is not changed, but his attributes (viz. independent desire and will) disappear, and God transmits His own attributes, viz. will and desire, to him. A word of warning is necessary here: It must not be supposed

here that a man comes to share divine attributes, just as iron comes to share the attributes of fire, viz. heat and light. There is no question at all of such an identity of attributes between God and man—they are entirely different in essence as well as in attributes. What the above illustration is meant to signify is that just as fire imposes its own attribute of heat on the iron and makes it hot by destroying its own quality of coldness, so God imposes His own attribute, viz. supreme will, on man, and makes him wholly subservient to Him by destroying his own attribute, viz. independent will and selfish desire. Thus a man is always a servant of God, sharing neither His essence nor His attributes, but being only controlled by Him. "Annihilation of attributes is possible," Hujwiri points out, "only in so far as one attribute may be annihilated through the subsistence of another attribute, both attributes belonging to man, but it is absurd to suppose that anyone can subsist through the attributes of another individual." Hence in annihilation and subsistence, there is the annihilation of the attributes of attachment and independent will, and substitution of other attributes of detachment and dependence on God. Thus, annihilation and subsistence mean nothing but the realisation of this eternal servanthood of man, the giving up of all independent desires and the ascription of all acts to Him.

### *Union and Separation*

From the Divine standpoint, union means that God unites mankind by His attribute of *commanding*, while separation means that He separates them by His act of *willing*. That is, He *commands* all alike, and everyone is equally subject to His laws; but He *wills* differently that some should obey the commands, some not, or, in other words, He favours, guides and aids some, and not others. Thus, in His commands, He is the same to all—this is union or non-difference between man and man. But in His will, He is partial—this is separation or difference between man and man. E.g. He *commanded* Iblis to worship Adam, but *willed* the contrary,<sup>1</sup> while He *commanded* other Angels the same thing, and also *willed* that they should do so. Thus, men are united by the command of God, but separated by His will.

From the human standpoint, union means divine gifts like love, contemplation, etc. In the state of union, a man depends entirely on God, and commits all his attributes and acts to Him (See above under

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<sup>1</sup> See under *Hallaj* p. 62.

"Annihilation" and "Subsistence"): What happens here is this: God divides His love and bestows a particle of it to each of His friends, as a special gift, then shrouds it with other particles of humanity, nature, temperament and spirit. But when that powerful particle of love transmits its own quality to the other particles, these latter no longer remain clay, but are wholly converted into love, so that all the actions of that man become merely expressions of his love for the Beloved alone. This is the state of 'union.' In the state of separation, he performs his religious and other duties as befits a true believer. This is a means preceding the state of union and also co-exists with and follows from it. It is wrong to assert that union is the denial of separation, i.e. to think that one who is annihilated from the self and subsistent in God need not perform any more acts of self-mortification, prayer etc. Sometimes it may so happen that when a man is overpowered by the love of God, he may be incapable of rational actions, but he should continue to practise devotion and mortify himself as long as he can. In fact there are two kinds of union:—(a) Sound union. In this state man is united with God in ecstasy, yet God makes him fulfil all His commands and perform all the religious duties. Many saints are continually in a state of rapture, but when the time for prayer comes, they regain consciousness, and after praying, they become enraptured again. (b) Broken union. In this state a man becomes so much overpowered and bewildered, that he is excused the performance of religious duties.

### *Intoxication and Sobriety*

Intoxication means the rapture of love for God, while sobriety means the attainment of annihilation and subsistence. Some (Abu Yazid and his followers) prefer intoxication to sobriety, because according to them, in intoxication all human attributes (like choice, 'self-dependence etc.) disappear, only non-human attributes persist. But in sobriety, the human attributes persist and veil God from man. Thus, in the former, man's acts are ascribed to God, in the latter God's (God-controlled) acts are ascribed to man. Hence, the former is far superior to the latter. But others (Junayd and his followers) hold that sobriety is superior to intoxication. Intoxication destroys the normal intelligence, sanity and self-control of a man. But an insane and unbalanced man can never attain union with God, for union involves annihilation and subsistence, (see above) and these are matters of direct realisation or perception. But how can an insane man perceive? It is knowledge



alone that unites man with God. It is because people fail to see the real nature of things that they forget God. Seeing may be of two kinds—a man may look with the eye of annihilation and to him all things are non-existent, except God; or he may look with the eye of subsistence, then to him all things are subsistent in God. In both the cases, he turns away from created things and turns to the Creator. This two-fold knowledge is impossible on the part of an intoxicated man. Hujwiri, too, subscribes to this view. He points out that really in intoxication, human attributes persist, as there is no vision or knowledge of annihilation and subsistence in the above sense. But in sobriety alone that is possible.

There are two kinds of intoxication: (a) Intoxication with the wine of affection. This is caused, as here the lover regards the benefits only, and as such sees himself only, not the Benefactor; (b) Intoxication with the cup of love. This is uncaused, as here he regards the Benefactor, and does not, as such, see himself. So this form of intoxication is really sobriety. Sobriety also is of two kinds:—(a) Sobriety of heedlessness, which is really intoxication and the greatest veil between man and God. (b) Sobriety of love, which is the clearest revelation. In fact, neither intoxication nor sobriety by itself leads to union, but only when it is based on the firm principle of love; otherwise, if based on selfishness, they lead nowhere.

### *Absence and Presence*

These really stand for the same thing from different points of view. Absence implies absence of the heart from all things save God, while presence is the presence of the heart with God. Absence of the self from itself implies its presence with God and vice versa.

### *Nature of Spirit. (al-ruh)*

The nature of spirit cannot be grasped by intelligence, but only through intuition. There are many conjectures about spirit. Some hold that spirit is the life through which the body lives. According to his view, spirit is an accident which at God's command keeps the body alive and is responsible for the changing states and motions of the body. According to a second view, spirit is not life itself, but an essential condition of life, an accident like life, and inseparable from the body. But the proper view is that the spirit is a substance, not an attribute or an accident, like life. Life is an attribute of man through which he

lives, and it is continually created by God so long as spirit resides within the body. Still spirit is not an indispensable condition of life, for spirit may go out of the body, while the man is still alive, as in sleep. But spirit is an indispensable condition of intelligence and knowledge, and so when spirit goes out, these are impossible.

In fact, the spirit is a subtle, corporeal substance—a kind of subtle body residing in the gross visible body. Spirit, too, being material is visible, but only to the eyes of intelligence. When God so pleases, spirits may reside in the corpses of birds, or may be armies that move to and fro. It is wrong to assert that the spirit is eternal, that it is the sole agent or governor of all things and to be worshipped as such, that it is the uncreated spirit of God, that it can transmigrate from one body to another, or that it is the incarnation of God in man. First, the spirit cannot be eternal, for then we have two eternal entities—God and spirit, which is impossible, for, an eternal reality is also infinite and there cannot be two infinite or omnipresent realities, without one being limited by the other. Secondly, the spirit is the servant of God like everything else, and God alone is the object of worship, not anything else. Thirdly, it is not the uncreated spirit of God. God alone is uncreated, everything else is created. The spirit, of course, was created prior to the body, then the body was created, and when the two were joined together, life was created by God. So, matter, life, body, spirit—all are created objects. Fourthly, the spirit cannot move from one body to another. Just as a body cannot have two lives, so a spirit cannot have two bodies. Fifthly, it is not an incarnation (hulhul) of God in man. According to this view, God resides in man, but how can the Eternal reside in a non-eternal abode? When two things are joined and commingled together they must be similar in nature. Again, the Hulhulis regard the spirit as an eternal attribute of God. But an eternal attribute of God cannot become the attribute of the non-eternal creatures. Further, if God's life can become man's life, His power too can become man's power, so that the distinction between the Master and servant disappears. Hence, all the above doctrines are entirely false. Our life is an act of God, and we live through His creation and not through His essence or attribute.

There are ten different kinds of spirits—spirits of the sincere, the pious, the disciples, the beneficent, the faithful, the martyrs, the yearning, the gnostics, the lovers and the dervishes.

### *Nature of the Lower soul (Nafs) and Passion*

According to some, the lower soul is a substance, like the spirit, lodged inside the body; but according to others, it is an attribute of the body, like life. Hujwiri accepts the former view. The lower soul is the immediate cause of all evils, viz.: sins like stealing etc. and base qualities like pride, anger etc. Sins are external and may be removed by internal attributes like repentance; while base qualities are internal and may be removed by external discipline. The lower soul being the seat of all evils is opposed to the spirit which is the seat of all good, still the two co-exist in the same body, and both are subtle things.

### *Human Nature*

What exactly is human nature? According to some, man is nothing but the spirit, and body is only the temple or abode of man. The attributes of spirit are sensation and intelligence. But this view is false, because even when the soul departs, the body is called a human being, and every creature that possesses a soul is not a human being. The second view is that man is spirit and body combined, neither mere spirit nor mere body. This view, too, is false, for the mere body of a man, not yet joined with a soul, has been called 'man' in Qu'ran. The third view is that man is an atom centred in the heart. But if some one's heart is taken out, the body is still a human being; further, the heart comes into the body after the soul. The fourth view is that man is not one who eats and drinks, but a divine mystery. The reply to it is that all people are called 'men', but all cannot be regarded as divine mysteries. The proper view is that man is the composition of three elements—body, soul and spirit, respectively possessing the attributes of sensation, passion and intelligence. The universe consists of two worlds—the present world and the next world (Heaven and Hell). In man, we find both the worlds combined, for he is a compound of phlegm, blood, bile and melancholy, corresponding to the four elements of this world—water, earth, air and fire; while his spirit, lower soul and body correspond to Heaven, Hell and Place of Resurrection. So, man is a type of the whole universe.

As regards the mortification of the lower soul, there are two opposed views. According to the first, it is essential to moral progress though only an indirect means to union with God and contemplation, because it only frees the soul from vices, but cannot directly lead it to God. Union with God does not depend on any causes or on any human efforts, but is a

direct gift from God. Here, some, however, hold that mortification is not only essential, but also the direct means to salvation. The second view is that as salvation depends not on human efforts, but only on a predestined Divine grace, such a mortification is altogether useless. What is necessary is only the simple faith of a child, not subject to any religious laws. But the difference between the two views is a mere matter of words. The first asserts that seeking is the cause of finding, the latter, that finding is the cause of seeking, and both are true. Mortification leads to contemplation, contemplation to mortification, and the two are interconnected and mutually dependent. Mortification is caused by Divine grace, and in its turn leads to Divine grace.

### *Saints and Prophets*

A saint is called a Wali, a friend of God, one who desires and is desired by Him. A saint is one whom God favours specially. He delivers him from the passions of the lower soul and makes him attached to Him alone, appoints him to be the moral governor of His kingdom, and grants him powers of miracles. A saint enjoys the two states of annihilation and subsistence as explained above. A saint is always and under every circumstance inferior to a prophet. A prophet is a saint, but a saint is not necessarily a prophet. A prophet is a saint as a messenger of God, ready and complete to preach and convert; but a saint has to traverse the Path to reach the Truth before he can teach others. Contemplation and Union with God is the first step of a prophet, while it is the end of a saint. A saint, therefore, follows a prophet and confirms what he teaches. Further, a saint is united with God only temporarily, a prophet permanently. A saint possesses only power of miracles (Karamat) while a prophet possesses the power of evidentiary miracles (Mujizat). The distinction between the two is that a saint can perform a miracle only when intoxicated, but a prophet can do so when sober. Hence, the miracle of a saint is a private affair, for he is so much enraptured that he pays no heed to others, and does not exhort them to follow him. But a prophet being sober, his miracle is public, and he purposely exhorts and challenges people. Again, a prophet's miracle-showing depends on his own will—he may or may not exercise the power at will. A saint's miracles, however, do not depend on him, but descend on him from God, whether he likes them or not.

*Uncovering of Eleven Veils or Mysteries.*

Here, Hujwiri discourses on eleven main topics, which are often misunderstood, and therefore, need explanation.

*First Veil of Gnosis of God (Ma'rifat)*

It is of two kinds—intellectual and emotional. Theologians, lawyers and other regard knowledge of God as intellectual in nature, i.e. as a right *cognition of God*. But the Sufis or the mystics regard it as emotional in nature, i.e. as a right *feeling* towards God. Hence, to the mystics, mere intellectual knowledge (ilm) is inferior to this emotional union (gnosis) with God, for one may *know* God intellectually, yet may not directly *feel* and *realise* Him; thus, mere intellectual knowledge is indirect and barren, and may not rise to direct realisation.

Some (Mu'tazilites) hold that gnosis is wholly intellectual and is attainable only by one who is rational. But it is found that those who lack reason may also possess gnosis (i.e. mad men) and faith (e.g. children) and conversely, all rational beings are not necessarily gnostics (viz. unbelievers). The second view is that gnosis is wholly demonstrative, i.e. God can be known only through inferences and deductions. This is similar to the first view and open to the same objections. Reason cannot know even itself, so how can it know God? Reason and proofs are *means* to knowing God, but not *causes* thereof,—the sole cause being God's own grace. Unaided reason cannot guide anyone to the right path, for without God's grace reason is blind. Demonstration means turning to something other than God, but gnosis means turning to God alone. Demonstration is all right in the case of ordinary knowledge, but as leading to knowledge of God, it is futile. Gnosis is the negation of reason. Rational conceptions of God do not at all represent His real characters. So, when reason is entirely suppressed, and the lover in despair stretches out his hands to the Beloved as the only resource, He is pleased to reveal Himself to him, and through such a revelation alone can He become known. The third view is that God can be known through inspiration, but this, too, is false. Different men may have different kinds of inspiration, but there is no criterion here to decide between them. But gnosis supplies a criterion for distinguishing truth from falsehood. The fourth view is that the knowledge of God is intuitive (perceptual) which, too, is untenable, for then, it would be common to all rational men, which it is not. Further

in that case, religious laws would not apply to God, for objects of intuition, such as one's self, day and night, pleasure and pain, are too obvious to all and cannot be doubted by any rational man, so that no religious discipline is at all necessary for knowledge about them. But gnosis is secret, difficult to attain, attainable by a few, and requires constant religious discipline.

*Second veil of Unification.*

Real unification (Tawhid) means the assertion of the unity of a thing and the knowledge about that unity. The unity of God is that He is One, having no equal or superior, no substitute or partner, no sharer in His essence and attributes. This is the view of the Unitarians; and hence their knowledge of unity is called Unification. There are three kinds of unification:—(1) God's unification of God i.e. God's knowledge of His own unity. (2) God's unification of His creatures, i.e. (a) His decree that man shall pronounce Him to be One, and (b) the creation of knowledge of unity in him. (3) Man's unification of God, i.e. man's knowledge of the unity of God. This is as follows:—God is One, a pure Unity without any duality. But His unity is not a unity of number, and He cannot be made two by the predication of another number. So, He is one without a second, He is the sole creator, but the numerous created beings do not make a 'second' for Him, for they are absolutely different from Him. His essence and attributes are eternal, without a beginning and without an end. His attributes are life, knowledge, forgiveness, mercy, will, power, hearing and seeing, speech and subsistence. His attributes are not different from Him, for He is one, nor yet the same as He.<sup>1</sup> He is omnipotent, omniscient and infinite, beyond space and time, not immanent in things, for then He would be similar to them, not joined with anything, for then that would be His part. He is not a body composed of limbs, nor a spirit requiring a body, nor an attribute inhering in a substance, nor a substance requiring another similar substance. He is the absolute Ruler and Judge, and predestines good and evil. His acts are due to His will, and His will is due to His knowledge which no one can know of. The knowledge of such a unity of God may be arrived at by means of reasoning. In the world nothing can exist by itself, but requires a cause. So, from the created objects one naturally

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<sup>1</sup> See under *Kalabadhi*, p. 65.

passes on to their Creator or Agent. This Agent is one, for if there be two agents for the same act, they become inter-dependent.

### *Third Veil of Faith.*

Some hold that faith is theoretical—viz. assertion about and belief in God. Others hold that faith is both theoretical and practical—assertion, belief and practice. The latter is the correct view. Faith implies belief in the heart and observance of Divine commands. Mere knowledge or mere acts are both useless. Hence, knowledge of God combined with acts of obedience to Him constitutes faith. Knowledge of God means knowing one of His attributes, the most important of which are of three kinds:—those connected with His perfection (Kamal), with His majesty (Jalal), with His beauty (Jamal). Those who are perfect alone know Him as Perfect. Those who know His beauty hanker for His vision, and those who know His majesty, become disgusted with their own attributes. Hanking for vision and hating human attributes are both signs of love, for it is these attributes that keep the lover and the Beloved apart. Hence, gnosis and faith are love, and obedience is the sign of love. To know and believe Him is to love Him, while this love finds practical expression in a complete submission to the will of the Beloved. Hence faith is both theoretical and practical—both love and loving acts of obedience. Some hold that obedience is necessary only so long as a man does not reach God, but on reaching Him, all exertion for obedience becomes unnecessary. But this view is wrong, for the more one knows and loves God, the more one longs to serve Him. The practical signs of faith are: refraining from seeing forbidden sights and looking only for God's evidences in the world, hearing His words, not eating what is unlawful, speaking the truth, and so on. The theoretical element of faith—gnosis and faith—cannot increase or decrease, for that would imply the increase and decrease of their object, God: only the practical element, viz. obedience can do so.

The question may be asked as to whether faith is entirely a gift of God or entirely the fruit of human labour. Both views are wrong—faith is neither a matter of sheer compulsion nor a matter of pure will. It is an act of man initiated by Divine guidance; i.e. the *inclination* to believe is the gift of God, but the *actual belief* is an act of man.

### *Fourth Veil of Purification from foulness.*

There are two kinds of purification, outer and inner. The former implies cleaning the body by water etc., the latter implies cleaning

the heart by unification (knowledge of God) and belief. Prayer requires the former and gnosis the latter kind of purification. Thus washing the body and washing the heart should really go together. Thus when a man washes his hands, he should simultaneously wash his heart of all covetousness; when he washes his mouth, he should at the same time purify it from the mention of any other than God, and so on. The method of spiritual purification is to kill all selfish desires, and for that self-mortification is necessary, which, again requires the strict observance of external rules of discipline under all circumstances.

*Repentance* : It is the first station in the Path to God. It involves three things, remorse for disobedience, immediate abandonment of sin and determination not to sin again. It has three causes or stations—that due to fear of Divine punishment, as in the case of ordinary people; that due to desire for Divine reward, as in the case of saints; that due to the desire of obeying God, as in the case of prophets. The first involves turning from major sins to obedience, the second from minor sins to love, the third from self to God.

### *Fifth Veil of Prayer.*

Etymologically, 'prayer' (namaz) means remembrance of and submission to God. But technically it stands for the five obligatory prayers to be performed daily at five different times. These depend on the following conditions:—Inner and outer purification of body and heart, cleanliness of outer and inner garments, outer cleanliness and inner purity of the place of prayer; turning outwardly towards the Kaba, inwardly towards the Throne of God, standing outwardly in the state of power and inwardly close to God, sincere desire to approach God; saying "Allah Akbar" in awe and humiliation, reciting the Quran, bowing and prostrating and being annihilated from human attributes. Some hold that through prayer, the devotee becomes "absent" from his own self and "present" with God. But really prayer is not a means to either "absence" or presence for a Divine Commandment is not a means to anything. Prayer is essential to all those who are engaged in self-mortification, those who have attained steadfastness and those who have "states" and to all the rest. Those who are still on the Path pray for acquiring the habit of devotion, but those who have attained their goal also pray in sheer thankfulness.

*Love* : The corollary of prayer is love. Love is used in three senses—viz. mutual love of created beings, characterised by inclination,



passion, and restless desire for union; man's love of God characterised by the same feelings, only towards God, not towards anything created; God's love of man, having two forms: favour and praise.

(a) God's love of man is a form of His will, like satisfaction, anger, mercy and so on; and will is an eternal attribute of God through which He performs actions. Hence, love is an eternal act or attribute of God. First it comprises in a special good will and favour towards those whom He chooses. He helps them in every way here and hereafter. Thus He turns them away from the world and towards Him, keeps them off from sins, endows them with lofty 'states' and 'stations' and rewards them here and hereafter. Secondly, God's love also manifests itself in the form of praise for their good deeds. This, too, is an eternal act on His part. (b) Man's love of God is characterised by an intense feeling of reverence and a strong desire of union with Him. Such a man completely turns away from the world, and seeks to satisfy His Beloved by constant remembrance and obedience. Lovers of God are of two kinds—those who love the benefits first, not the Benefactor Himself, and then are led to love the Benefactor through those benefits showered by Him; and those who, first, love the Benefactor Himself, and not the benefits which they take as so many veils between them and the Beloved, and are then, led to think of the benefits only because they proceed from Him. It goes without saying that the last kind of lovers are far superior. (c) Human love is instigated by the lower soul and hence best avoided.

*Love and excessive love:* Sometimes, a distinction is drawn between love (mahabbat) and excessive love (ishq). Excessive love is the love which arises when the Beloved is debarred from the lover. Hence, God cannot have excessive love for man, for man is not debarred from Him; but man can have such a love for God. Some, however, hold that excessive love means love for essence and desire for vision. But God's essence is ever unattainable, while His vision is not attainable here. So, men cannot have any excessive love for God.

#### *Love as a fundamental ethical principle.*

According to the mystics, the Path to God is one of love, and all the "states" and "stations" are but stages of love, although they are called by different names.

#### *Love as a fundamental cosmical principle.*

It is love that led God to create soul, spirit and heart. Thus God created hearts, spirit, souls and bodies in succession, each seven thousand

years before the other. He kept the hearts in the station of union revealing His beauty to them three hundred sixty times each day; the spirits in the station of intimacy, letting them hear His words of love; and the souls in the station of proximity, bestowing three hundred and sixty favours to them. Then, they surveyed the universe and became proud, and hence God, wishing to punish them, imprisoned the heart in the spirit, spirit in the soul, the soul in the body and body in the universe, mingling reason with them. Then He issued commands and sent down prospects in order that the heart etc. may regain their original stations. Accordingly, the body began to pray, the soul to love, the spirit to strive after intimacy and the heart to hanker after union.

### *Sixth veil of Alms.*

Alms is one of the essential duties of a man. It is really thanksgiving for a favour or benefit received from God, and hence it has not only outward charity, but also inward devotion to God, corresponding to the benefit received. E.g. a person in good health owes something to God, and so his every limb must be engaged in devotion to Him, and not in worldly pastimes. Some Sufis accept alms, but some refuse to do so on the ground that as they themselves cannot give alms (having no wealth or property), they cannot accept alms and thereby let the givers have the upper hand or become superior to them. But this view is wrong. The Sufis and Dervishes are under a Divine obligation to accept alms from others who can afford to do so. Internal alms or thanksgiving to the Lord is obligatory on rich and poor alike. But external alms or charity, though not obligatory on the poor, is so on the rich. But how can the rich discharge their essential obligations of charity unless the poor consent to accept alms from them? That is why, the Sufis must, in accordance with God's command, accept alms from others in order to enable them to do their duties towards God. Hence it is not the giver who is granting a favour by giving, but really it is the receiver who is doing so by accepting. Thus the receiver is superior to the giver, not vice versa.

A distinction is sometimes drawn between liberality and generosity. God is only liberal (jawad) and not generous (sakhi), because He is not called so in the Qu'ran and the traditions. But men may be both liberal and generous. Generosity is the rudimentary stage of liberality when selfish motives are present, but in generosity such motives are entirely absent. The best maxum of liberality is to follow one's first

thought, which comes from God direct and not to let the second thought prevail over it.

### *Seventh Veil of Fasting.*

Fasting is a very important religious discipline. Fasting leads to devotion, devotion to mercy, and mercy to Paradise. Hence Junayd says: "Fasting is half the Way". Fasting means abstinence, and abstinence is the real method of the Sufis. Hunger has a salutary effect on the mind, although it afflicts the body. At the door of the heart, there are two sentinels, passion fed by the lower soul and reason, fed by the spirit. When the body is well-nourished the lower soul, too, becomes strong, and passions increase. But when the body is denied nourishment, the lower soul becomes weak, passions disappear, reason is strengthened and begins for the first time, to think of God and deduce proofs of God's existence from evidences found in the world. That is why, fasting is so important. But mere abstinence from food is no good, it must be accompanied at the same time by other kinds of abstinence of every sense and every limb. The eyes must refrain from lustful looks, the ears from evil words, the mouth from false words, and the body from worldly pursuits. Continual fasting is not possible or recommended for ordinary people. It is only a miracle, vouchsafed to prophets and saints.

### *Eighth Veil of Pilgrimage.*

Pilgrimage is of two kinds, extenal or visiting holy places like Mecca, and internal or journey towards union with God. The second is more important and must accompany the first. It is no use journeying away from home unless we journey away from sins first; no use seeking God in a Temple unless we seek Him in our hearts first. Hence really speaking the external journey by itself is of no value whatsoever. Thus pilgrimages are classed better under the two heads of—absence from God and presence with God. Anyone who is absent from God at Mecca is no better than one who is absent from God at home. And, one who is present with God at Mecca is no better than one who is present with God at home. Hence presence with God is the real pilgrimage and whether one actually travels to a holy place or not is of a minor importance.

*Contemplation:* Contemplation means spiritual vision of God. There are two kinds of contemplation—that which is the result of perfect faith and that which is the result of rapturous love. In the first case, the saint never sees anything without seeking God therein;

in the second case, he never sees anything except God. That is, in the first case, he sees the acts of God through his physical eyes, and then sees the Agent through his spiritual eyes. But in the latter case, he sees only the Agent, and is altogether blind to anything besides Him, as the evidences of God as found in the world, appear as so many veils to Him, separating him from Him. Contemplation is a gift of God, bestowed by Him when man's self-will completely disappears. So, we must not even wish to see God, for wishing is a form of self-will and disobedience. Our only duty is to resign ourselves to God's will, without ourselves wishing for anything. God knows what is best for us, not we. This contemplation on spiritual vision must not be confused with the idea of God that we frame in our minds through imagination. Finite human imagination can never comprehend the infinite God. Imagination is an act of intellect, and intellect can think of only that which is similar to it—only of finite and created objects. Hence contemplation which is an act of the heart is quite distinct from intellectual imagination which is an act of the spirit. Contemplation in this world is an unique something, corresponding only to the actual vision of God in the next world.

#### *The ninth Veil of Companionship.*

Good manners are essential to all believers. Good manners consist in the observance of virtue, of custom and of respect. Rules of discipline, befitting every "station" in the Path are obligatory on all. It is wrong to think that those who are in ecstasy are not bound to perform religious duties. There are three kinds of rules of discipline—regarding God, one's own self and others. The first means that one must always behave in such a manner as if he is in the presence of an all-seeing king. The second means that even when alone, one must behave in the same manner as one behaves in the presence of God or of others. What he is ashamed of doing before others and God, he must be equally ashamed of doing before his own self. The third means that one must act well and follow the custom of the Prophet.

*Companionship*: This is essential for a novice. He must not try solitary confinement, so long as his heart is not strong, for that may lead to disastrous results. Companionship implies treating everyone according to his position—an old man with respect, a young man with affection and so on. A religious companionship should not be dissolved for temporal reasons. Dervishes are of two kinds—residents and travellers. The rule is that a resident dervish should regard a travel-

ling dervish as superior, because the latter is detached from all worldly things; but a travelling dervish should think a resident dervish superior because the latter has attained and settled down while he himself is still seeking: That is, each must avoid vanity and self-importance and think others superior to him.

Here Hujwiri discusses at length the rules for resident and travelling Dervishes, i.e. those regarding their eating, walking, sleeping, speech and silence, asking, marriage and celibacy.

#### *Tenth Veil of Technical Terms.*

Here, the author discusses a large number of technical terms of the Sufis. Only two pairs are discussed here.

*‘Ilm and Ma’rifat.* The first means ordinary knowledge without spiritual insight or religious practice. The latter means spiritual insight or feeling and religious practice.

*Shari’at and Haqiqat.* The first means Law, the second Truth. It is wrong to assert with the formal theologians that there is no distinction between the two; as well as to assert that one can subsist without the other—that when Truth is revealed, Law is unnecessary. Truth and Law, belief and profession are different because Truth is eternal, but Law may change; the former is God’s gift, the latter man’s act. They are interconnected, because spiritual insight must express itself in spiritual acts; and spiritual acts must be based on spiritual insight. Their relation is like the relation between spirit and body which are different, yet inter-connected.

#### *The eleventh Veil of Audition (Sama).*

Of all the senses, hearing is the superiormost, for through hearing we come to know of God’s revelation. The most delightful and beneficial audition is God’s word, the Qu’ran. Other kinds of audition, too, are permissible, viz. poetry and melodies, provided these are good and lawful. What is good and lawful is permissible, whether in prose or in verse, whether spoken or sung, what is not so is not permissible in any form whatsoever.

### VII Ibnu’l-Arabi

Muhyi’l-Din Ibnu’l-Arabi is regarded by some as the greatest of all Moslem mystics. Two of his most famous works are “*Futubat al-Makkiyya*” (Meccan Revelations) and “*Fususul-Hikam*” (Bezels of Divine Wisdom or Philosophy). He tried to combine “the most extra-

vagant mysticism with "the straitest orthodoxy." (Nicholson). Controversies raged for centuries over the real meaning of his doctrines. Many accused him of holding heretical doctrines like the Incarnation of God in man, identity of God and man and so on; and many wrote in his defence as well. In any case, he was held in a very high esteem and was given the title of "Grand Master". His works too, were widely copied and read.

The central doctrine of his system is the conception of unity of Being and the Perfect Man. He distinguishes between two aspects of God:—(1) God as the Absolute, a Pure Being or a Simple Essence, devoid of all attributes and relations; (2) God as Divinity, an Essence endowed with attributes. The first is the unmanifest, the second the manifest form of God. Through a logical necessity of knowing Himself, God moves down from His unmanifest state of Pure Essence and evolves, through a series of five planes, until He finds His complete manifestation in the Perfect Man and knows Himself thus. The five planes (hadarat) in which God manifests Himself are (1) the plane of Essence, (2) the plane of Attributes, (3) the plane of Actions, (4) the plane of Similitudes and Phantasy or imaginal thought (Khyal), i.e. the plane of the intelligible world or world of Ideas, i.e. prototypes or universals, (5) the plane of sense and ocular vision, or the plane of the sensible world, i.e. particulars corresponding to the universals. Each succeeding plane is a copy of the preceding plane. If we take the last two planes, every particular object found in the world contains in it the universal to which it belongs. E.g. a living person contains in it "life", which exists in thought as a universal, yet has an external existence in so far as it is contained in a particular. The process of creation is, thus, nothing but God's process of knowing Himself, and the relation between God and the Universe is that between the knowing self or subject and itself as the object. In knowing Himself, God knows all things that are in Himself and distinguishes them as objects. Thus, God is at the same time Knowledge, Knower, Known, though He remains essentially a Unity. This triplicity inherent in the Unity is the truth of things. The world exists potentially in God's thought from all eternity, and creation means that God brings the universe from merely being in His Knowledge into actual being. While God is independent of the world in His first aspect of Pure Essence, He is in need of it in His second aspect as Divinity. Hence, Ibnu'l 'Arabi says: "He praises me and I praise Him. How can He be independent when I help Him and aid Him? For that cause God brought

me into existence, and I know Him and bring Him into existence." Thus, the universe is but the sum total of the attributes of God, manifested in the process of knowing Himself; but as Essence and attributes are really identical, God and the world, too, are really so. God is both the spirit *and* the form of the universe. It is not that God is the spirit *of* the form, which is the universe: Arabi expresses the relation between God and world metaphorically as self-unveiling overflowing, permeating and producing an effect or impression. A contingent being is like the shadow cast by the Real Being on the form of the phenomena, and illumined by the Divine Name "the Outward". Phenomena are constantly changing and substituted by new ones. (See Jami.)

Man is the crown and end of creation, the only perfect and complete manifestation of God. Other things are brought into existence before man, as they reflect only some attributes of God. But in man all the attributes are fully and finally manifested, so that in him the process of creation reaches its climax and no further creation is possible or necessary. So long as man was not created, God could not see Himself completely, and hence man is the true mirror of God. Hence the universe without man is compared by 'Arabi to a soulless body or an unpolished mirror.

Ibnu'l-'Arabi's theory was ably propounded by Jili and will be considered in detail under him.

### VIII Nasafi

The following account is based on Nasafi's "Maqsad i aqsa" ("Furthest Aim"), a Persian treatise on Theosophy, largely based on the teachings of Ibn 'Arabi.

#### Metaphysics

##### God

*His Nature.* God is, as usual, conceived as one, eternal, unchangeable, incomparable, indivisible and immaterial. He is infinite, illimitable and omnipresent. God pervades the whole world, is immanent in every single atom, and near to man, although man in his ignorance considers himself far off from God. This proximity of God is known to man only in the light of God Himself. There may be three kinds of proximity—of time, of space and of attribute, e.g. We say A is nearer

B in time than is C; or A is nearer B in space than is C; or A resembles B more in attribute than does C. But knowledge of God's proximity is very different. Really, God is equally proximate to all, for to Him all are alike. It is wrong to assert that God is nearer to some than to others, that the wise are closer to Him than are the ignorant. The fact is that, all those who seek Him are near to Him, and all those who do not do so are far away from Him.

An objection may be raised against God's all-pervasiveness and immanence. It may be thought that if God resides in the world, then He is sure to be defiled, disturbed and confined by. But the fact is that God is subtler than the universe, and the subtler pervades the grosser, but is not disturbed and confined by it, e.g. the human soul not only resides inside the body but also pervades it; but the states and conditions of the body cannot really affect the soul. The same is the case here. God pervades the world, but the world cannot affect it in any way.

*His attributes.* God possesses an infinite number of holy attributes and is devoid of all imperfections whatsoever. The distinction between God's attributes, names and works is that they respectively refer to His nature, aspect and individuality. Attributes are really the same as the nature of God, for, God is one and the only reality. Again, the attributes are also taken as different from God, because they stand for and mean distinct ideas. The attributes of God are of three kinds—positive attributes, or those that imply His eternal nature, viz. living, eternal, author and omnipotent; relative attributes, or those that signify His attendant powers, such as, giver of life and death, exalter and debaser; negative attributes, or those that imply absence of imperfection, such as blamelessness, holiness etc.

### COSMOLOGY.

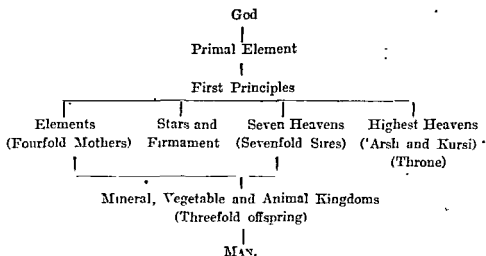
#### *Kinds of Creation.*

God's works are of two kinds—visible and invisible. The first is the material world, the second the spiritual world. The invisible world is inhabited by those whose existence is revealed in inspiration, those who make their existence felt. The first has two sub-divisions viz. emanations or angels; agencies or door-keepers of God who bring down God's gifts to earth, the head of whom is Mohammed. The second too has two subdivisions viz. agents or presiding genii or personified laws of animals, vegetable and minerals; powers or genii and devils, of whom Iblis is the head.



The material world is also of two kinds—heavenly and earthly. The heavenly world consists of the highest heavens (Throne and Seat of God), seven inferior heavens, firmament and stars. The earthly world consists of the face of the earth, elements, signs (thunder, lightning and rain), compound bodies (animal, vegetable, mineral), sea and so on.

*Process of Creation.* In the very beginning, God created the Primal Element out of Himself in the twinkling of an eye, without any medium whatsoever. It is also called the Pen (as it writes out the universe at the command of God), Primal intelligence, constructive spirit, spirit of Mohammad and so on. It alone, has a direct connection with God, and is ever-present in Him, ever-seeking Him. It is exceedingly subtle and the perfection of wisdom. From the Primal Element springs the entire universe. Thus, from the Primal Element, first, the Simple Natures or First principles arise, from them the heavens, stars, and the firmament, intelligences, souls, elements and natures; from them again, compound bodies or mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms; last of all man. There are nine heavens, the highest of which is called the Heaven of Heavens or the Throne of God. Each of these has a soul and an Intelligence, higher and more subtle in proportion to their order. The intelligence of the highest Heaven is called Primal Intelligence. Thus, the process of creation is as follows:—



Man is the crown, the end of creation. Man attains perfection when he attains intelligence. Thus intelligence is the beginning and the end of creation. From Primal Intelligence to Man there is a complete

circle from intelligence to intelligence in descent of God to man and ascent of man back again to God.

Thus the universe has four sources—Nature of God, Constructive Spirit, Invisible and Sensible Worlds. The first is called an Infinite and Illimitable Light. The second too, is an Infinite and Illimitable Light from which springs the entire universe, as explained above. These four sources mutually precede one over the other in place and time. Thus the nature of God begets, the constructive spirit conceives and the heavens and the elements are the offspring. Again, the heavens beget and the elements conceive and the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms are the offspring. These constitute the Greater World, Man constitutes the Lesser World. The Primal Element or the constructive spirit is the soul of Mohammed. As the Primal Element, he has two-fold functions, viz. receiving God's Message and conveying it to the world. The first is called saintly and the second the prophetic office. Hence, Muhammad was a prophet even before the construction of the world, and is still so.

*Purpose of Creation.* God created the world in order that He might become known. "David enquired and said; 'Oh Lord! why hast thou created mankind?' God said: 'I am a hidden treasure and I would fain become known.'" Hence, the world was created for man and man for the knowledge of God. Thus, the universe is conceived as the mirror of God and the heart of man as the mirror of the universe, in which God's majesty and perfection are reflected and in which God sees Himself.

*Study of Man.* Man is created for the knowledge of God who is reflected in his own heart. Hence the best and the shortest way to a knowledge of God is to know one's own heart. Hence the saying "know thyself." For this, a physiological knowledge, too, of man is necessary. As pointed out above, Man springs from four sources—Nature of God, Constructive Spirit, Invisible and Sensible World which constitute the Greater World. In the Lesser World, too, there are four sources—male, female, body and soul of man. Thus, first nerves, and limbs and members are formed. Next, when these are nourished by blood, the vegetative spirit appears. Later on, when digestive organs become developed the heart attracts the essence of the vegetative spirit the animal or living spirit is formed. Then, the brain attracts the essence of this spirit, and the instinctive spirit is formed, and the rest, dispersed through nerves and limbs become the source of sense and

motion. The senses of men are ten in number; five external and five internal. The external senses are sight, hearing etc. The internal senses are common sense, imagination (these two situated in the front of the brain), apprehension, memory (these two situated at the back of the brain) and reflection (situated in the middle). The common sense apprehends what is apprehended by the external senses and is involved in imaginations. E.g. distinguishing a friend from an enemy, through visible marks is the task of common sense. It, thus, apprehends the real nature of the sense-perceptions. Apprehension apprehends invisible subjects and is involved in memory. Reflection apprehends the concepts of imagination. The motive powers of man are of two kinds—causative and active. The former has two forms, viz. attraction for pleasure and repulsion for pain. The active powers act under the direction of the causative, producing motion, etc. at their bidding. These above are the qualities possessed in common by both men and animals. But the difference between the two is that while an animal possesses a vegetative spirit, a living spirit and an instinctive spirit, man possesses in addition the spirit of humanity. This spirit is breathed into man by God Himself and is the same as the Primal Element. Man attains this spirit late in life, at the age of thirty or even eighty years. (See below).

#### *The Goal and the Means.*

As pointed out above, the goal of man is the knowledge of God. This knowledge is, however, quite distinct from ordinary perception or inference, but can be attained only through the light of God Himself. Hence, a man must exert himself to get this light of God, and when he gets this, he gets God. That is, God has descended to man through the Primal Element in order that He may become known; and man, in his turn, attaining perfect intelligence ascends to the Primal Element, and thence to God, completing the circle. Hence man is likened to a traveller journeying to God through the Mystic Path. Journey is of two kinds, to God and in God. The first means knowledge of God, and when the traveller comes to know God, his journey to God ends. Then begins his journey in God or knowledge of other objects.

*Law, Doctrine and Truth.* The Law is the word of the Prophet, the Doctrine is the example of the Prophet and Truth is the vision of the Prophet. That is, Law means accepting scriptural injunctions and prohibitions, confirming them in the heart and declaring them

with the tongue. Doctrine means acting according to them; Truth means knowing God first, then the nature and properties of material objects. It is necessary for the Traveller to know the Law and act according to the Doctrine and then alone can he get the Truth. That is, a perfect man is not only a wise man, but also a good one. Theory and practice should be combined. Practice consists of ten works, viz. search after God, search after wisdom, seeking the society of the wise and being their disciple, obedience to the wise, renunciation, piety, submission to the Law, retinence or speaking little, vigilance or sleeping little, temperance or eating little. These are the "ten fierce dragons" to keep the Traveller away from leaving the Path. Further, the Traveller has ten marks—knowledge of God, first, then of other objects, being at peace with all the world, universal charity, humility, submission and resignation, trust in God, freedom from avarice, contentment, inoffensiveness and conviction or faith.

*Perfect Man.* A perfect man, as pointed out above is one who knows the Law, practises the Doctrine and apprehends the Truth. That is, he has four kinds of perfection—of good words, of good deeds, of good principles and of sciences. A perfect man is called elder, leader, teacher and so on. He is the mirror of the universe, as in his heart God reveals Himself. If the universe be taken as a body, the perfect man is its soul, if the universe be taken as a tree and mankind as its fruit, then the perfect man is the essence of this fruit. He has perfect knowledge of God and then of other objects, and henceforward, he devotes himself to the good of the world, and to the spiritual progress and perfection of his fellow-beings by precept and example. The perfect man, although perfect in knowledge, is yet imperfect in power, i.e. many things are forced on him inspite of his wishes to the contrary, while many things he wants to attain elude him. Hence a perfect man, realising the futility of human desires, resigns himself to the will of God alone, and renounces everything. Such a man is not only perfect, but also free.

*Perfectly free man.* Over and above the four marks of a perfect man, a perfectly free man possesses the additional characteristics of renunciation, retirement, contentment and leisure. Freedom means freedom from desires that bind us to the world and make us slaves of it. A man may be perfect in knowledge and practice, but unless he breaks asunder the chain of passions he is not free. There are two grades of perfectly free man—those who have renounced wealth and dignity only,

and those who have renounced eldership and teachership also, aiming at complete retirement and leisure. These, again, are of two classes—those who chose obscurity because human society will detract them from thoughts of God, and those who choose resignation and contemplation because they realise the inherent ignorance of mankind. Both retire from the world, but for different reasons.

#### FELLOWSHIP OR DEVOTION TO THE TEACHER.

This is essential to the Traveller, for from the wise alone can we learn the secret of the Path and the Goal. Therefore, association with the wise is the first beginning of the moral life. In order that he may get the best advantage out of such an association, the disciple must observe certain rules, such as hearing what they say, but speaking little, answering questions when directly asked and promptly, not arguing for the sake of arguing, not boasting and so on.

*Renunciation.* It is of two kinds—external and internal. The first means abandoning worldly wealth, the second means suppressing worldly desires. In short, renunciation means giving up whatever hinders the Traveller on his Path, such as wealth, dignity, even too much prayer and fasting. Renunciation must be carried on under the direction of a teacher. The general rule is that necessities of life, like food, clothing and shelter, must not be given up, for then the devotee would have to beg these from others which would produce avarice in him. Possession of too much wealth and complete abandonment of the essentials are both bad. The wise course is to steer a middle course between these two extremes.

*Threefold aid to the Traveller.* These are attraction, devotion and elevation. Attraction means the drawing of man by God towards Himself. When God, thus, attracts a man towards Himself, the man turns away from the world and has an inclination, desire and love for Him. Thus, God's attraction and man's inclination go together. When inclination becomes strong, it becomes desire, and desire is developed into love. Such a man turns away from the world, and may remain in this state only, without rising higher. They are called, "the attracted." Others pass their life in devotion. Hence, they are called "the devoutly attracted." If a man practises devotion first and is then, attracted towards God, he is called "the attracted devotee". If he practises devotion only without being attracted, he is called "the devotee." The distinction between the stages of attraction and devo-

tion is that in the first case, the initiative comes from God, in the second case from man. In the first case, the man is drawn towards God by God Himself and is content by giving up everything besides God, in the second case, he tries to know God and then other objects. Elevation means progress. (See below).

*Spiritual Development of Man.* We have seen that man in addition to his animal qualities possesses also the spirit of humanity, developed late in life. The development of this spirit is due to the man's capacity which, again, depends on the cultivation of good qualities and avoidance of bad, hence it is the prime duty of the traveller to acquire capacity and attain humanity. In order that he may attain this spirit, he must suppress the animal, the brutal and the fiendish nature in him. He who only eats, drinks, sleeps and indulges himself is an *animal*, he who is all the above and further gives way to anger and cruelty in a *brute*; he who is all the above and further given to lying and deceit is a *fiend*. When a man attains this spirit of humanity, he attains soon the Divine Light, his goal, and his upward journey is completed. This spirit of Humanity, like the Primal Element, proceeds straight from God. Hence, the two are identical, and are called Concomitant Spirit. This spirit pervades and governs the entire world. Externally, it begets the universe in the manner explained above. Internally, it abides in the heart of man. The same spirit animates all living men, and when they die, it returns to itself, and is not increased or diminished. It is like the sun which illumines all the windows, but when they are destroyed, is not itself diminished. When the Primal Element or spirit of Humanity illumines the heart of man, he attains intelligence, not before that; from that knowledge which is the attribute of intelligence; from that the Divine Light and knowledge of the mysteries of the universe. Then he attains perfection and his upward journey ends. Still, he must remain humble, think that he knows nothing and constantly seek the aid of God.

*Ascent of Man.*—The ascent of man has nine stages, viz. (1) when he comes to have a faith in Revelation, he reaches the stage of belief and is called a "believer" (Mumin). (2) When he further acts according to God's Commands and prays earnestly day and night, he is called a "worshipper," (Abid). (3) When he renounces the world and contemplates God only, he is called a "recluse" (Zahid). (4) When he further knows God and the mysteries of other objects, he is called a "gnostic" (arif). (5) When he attains to a love of God, he is called

a "saint" (wali). (6) When he is endowed with inspiration and power of working miracles, he is called a "prophet" (nabi). (7) When entrusted with God's own message, he is called an "apostle" (Rusul). (8) When he is appointed to preach a new faith, denouncing an old one, he is called a "missionary". (9) When this mission is final, he arrives at the stage of "Seal".

*Destiny of Man.* After death the soul of man returns to the Heaven corresponding to the stage he has reached. Thus, the believer goes to the lowest heaven, the seal to the highest. Just as there are nine heavens, seven inferior and two superior, so the stages in the upward progress of man too, are also just the same. Those who have not attained any of these stages, go to Hell.

*Upward Progress.* The upward progress of man is described thus by some: All existent things are compounded of two elements—light and darkness. These two are inseparable, but although one cannot be entirely separated from the other, yet light may be made predominant so that the real nature and attributes of man may become manifest. Predominance of darkness over light is due to the blinding influence of passions, while predominance of light results from the gradual suppression of the lower self. Thus separation, as far as possible, of light from darkness is the upward progress of man. This happens thus: The bodies of men and animals contain certain organs which act for this separation. Thus, when food is introduced into the stomach, the liver extracts its essence, forming the vegetable spirit, and transmits it to the heart; the heart in its turn extracts the essence forming the living spirit 'or life' and transmits it to the brain; the brain, again, extracts its essence and forms the elixir of life, the instinctive spirit, the real light of all. But this is only a flickering and faint light which must be made steady and bright by renunciation and contemplation until it produces the true light, the light of the spirit of humanity. Thus, the human body may be compared to a lantern, the vegetative spirit to the lamp, the animal spirit to the wick, the instinctive spirit to the oil and the spirit of humanity to the fire that kindles all. Just as the oil nourishes the flame, so the instructive spirit should feed the spirit of humanity. When the instinctive spirit is thus kindled by the spirit of humanity, God, through His grace illumines the heart of the Traveller and leads Him to an understanding of His own nature. Thus, the circle is complete—God to man, man to God, and the upward progress of man is completed.

*Conclusion.* To sum up: God created the universe in order that he may become known. But such a knowing is possible only on the part of man. Hence man is the last, but the crown and the real aim of creation. Man, again, can fulfil his mission only through the attainment of intelligence. Hence such an attainment of intelligence is the sole aim of man. Thus man, sprung up from Intelligence (Primal Element), tends to return to the same. That is why, the whole course is described as a circle, having two arcs, that of Descent and that of Ascent. The arc of descent consists of all the stages through which the Primal Intelligence is developed into the reasoning power of man; and the arc of ascent consists of all the stages through which the reasoning power is again reabsorbed into the Divine Intelligence. This is the origin and the return of man. The ascent is described as a journey through a Path. Thus, first, when a man having a fully developed reasoning power, wishes to know about this Path and its different stages and turns to the doctrines about these, he is called a searcher after God. Secondly, when he, further, wishes to know about these in details and approaches a wise teacher, he is called a disciple. Thirdly, when he actually under the direction of his preceptor, starts on the journey he is called a traveller. This journey has eight stages. The first stage is the service or worship of God which is the first step towards the knowledge of God. The second stage is love. When God is pleased with his worship, He attracts him towards Himself, and the traveller comes to have an inclination, then a desire and then love for Him. The third stage is seclusion. Through love of God, all his worldly desires are suppressed and he renounces the world completely. The fourth stage is knowledge. Having renounced the world, the traveller occupies himself with a constant enquiry into the nature, attributes and works of God. The fifth stage is ecstasy. Then sixth stage is the revelation of Truth. The seventh stage is union. And the eighth stage, after death, is absorption in the Deity.

#### IX Mahmud Shabistari

The following account is based on his *Gulshan i Raz* "(The Mystic Rose Garden)", a famous Persian treatise on Sufism. It consists of fifteen questions and answers.

##### *Nature of Logical Thought*

There are two kinds of thinking—logical demonstration and spiritual illumination. The general definition of thinking is that it is the means of passing from falsehood to truth. But the first kind of thinking



enables us only to attain to mere empirical and phenomenal truth, but cannot proceed beyond to the real truth about God's absolute unity. Logical thinking is as follows. First, the major premises or first principles are innate and intuitive in us. Next from these with the help of the minor premises we pass on to an unknown conclusion. Thus, logical thinking or inference implies a passing from the known to the unknown. But inference, though quite useful in ordinary life is futile in spiritual life; for here the known is the phenomenal or the contingent, while the unknown is the noumenal and necessary. But how can one pass from the less to the more? God is more general than His works, so how can we infer God's existence from His works and pass from the less general to the more general? Sense supplies us with the knowledge of finite objects as data and can, as such, pass on only to finite objects as conclusions but can never rise to the infinite. To seek God by reason is just as absurd as to seek the blazing sun by the dim light of a torch. Hence, Philosophers trying to do so have landed into false theories about the Truth, e.g. they regard the world as permanent, self-dependent and separate from God, and God as altogether transcendent." In fact, "since the two eyes of the philosopher see double, he is impotent to behold the unity of the Truth." He regards God and world as two distinct entities, while in truth, there is only one God. Anthropomorphism or likening God to a material body dwelling in the highest heaven; Metempsychosis or doctrine of transmigration of souls; doctrine of Incarnation etc. too are false philosophical theories. Thus logical thought or reason cannot grasp Reality. It can think of the mercies of God only, not of His essence. His essence can be known only through His own light, illuminating the heart which "burns up reason from head to foot." Hence it is only through the complete suppression of reason that God can be known. The so-called light of reason is a pseudo-light, while the so-called darkness of the heart, when reason is extinguished, is light because it shows the Truth as it really is, as one and free from all plurality. To reason, the Truth is world and God, to illumination it is God alone. Thus sense and reason are unable to shake off the illusion of duality. When trying to look at Truth, the Light of lights, reason is blinded like a bat by the sun. The highest perfection of reason is to realise its own nothingness in presence of the Reality. When thus, the phenomenal self, with its sense and reason and will, is annihilated, the light of God illumines the heart through which alone He is known. This will become clear if the aim of creation be taken into account.

*Cosmology*

*Aim of Creation.* God created the world in order that He may become known. Hence God, the Pure Being, *reflects* Himself on the Non-being like a mirror as the sun is reflected on the water and this reflection is the universe. But who is to see and know this reflection? None but man. Man is the eye that sees the reflection; but the eye cannot see by itself; even though the object be present before itself, it requires, further, a light. This light is not the light of reason, but God's own light, through which alone man sees God. In other words, God sees Himself through man. To sum up:—God is the essence reflected, Not-being, the mirror; world, the reflection; man, the seeing eye; and God, the light of the eye. Hence, God is at once the seer, the seeing eye and the thing seen."

*Process of Creation.* Creation is a process of successive emanations from God through which He is reflected on Not-being. The first emanation is universal reason (cf. Neoplatonic 'logos'); the second, universal soul, (cf. Neoplatonic 'pneuma'); the third, the highest heaven ('arsh, the ninth heaven or the heaven of heavens); the fourth, the throne (the eighth heaven); then the other seven heavens or heavenly bodies, then the four elements, then the three kingdoms (mineral, vegetative and animal) and last of all man. The highest heaven is called the "throne of the Merciful", but the heart of man, too, is the throne of God, and really, the highest heaven is subordinate to the heart in this respect. It is continually moving round the world and other heavens, also, are doing so, being moved by this (cf. Ptolemaic Theory). There are one thousand twenty-four fixed stars around the eighth heaven. The moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn reside respectively in the earth and the other six heavens. It is equally wrong to deny intelligence to the heavens as to regard them as self-moved, independent governors of worldly objects. The four elements, fire, air, water and earth, though different in nature, combine to produce compound bodies, viz. first minerals, then plants, then animals. Last of all, man is created. He is last in order of time, but first in order of thought, as the entire creation is really for the sake of man. Again universal reason, the first emanation, is also the very essence of man, the last emanation, hence, the first and the last are the same. In this world, everything else is a subsidiary means to man, but man is an end in himself, and not a means to a still higher end. The entire universe reflects God, but not all the attributes of God; it is in man alone that

God's nature and attributes are manifested in full. Man, the mirror of Divinity, is, on one side, blackened by the darkness of Not-Being in order that he may mirror Being. Man is good on one side, bad on the other. The former represents the beautiful attributes of God (jamal), the latter His terrible attributes (jalal). The universal reason, the first emanation from God, animates all things and is also the very essence of man. Hence man is really connected with all other things on earth, *their souls being the same as his own soul. In this sense, man is the soul of the world.* Man possesses ten thousand natural powers of digestion, growth and so on; and infinite volitions. Each creature or each power reflects some one of the names or attributes of God—it was created for that purpose and returns to it. But man being the epitome, the soul of all creatures, reflects all the seven essential attributes of God—viz. power, knowledge, will, hearing, seeing, living and speaking.

*Phenomenality of the Universe:—*The world is not different from God, though it appears to be so, but is nothing but God in essence. Every atom reflects a Divine quality, and when it puts off its limitation and phenomenal character, it becomes one with the Absolute. "Beneath the veil of each atom is hidden the heart-ravishing beauty of the Beloved's face." When this veil is removed, when all phenomena and the self—all plurality is annihilated in God, God, soul and world become one and God becomes the sole reality. Hence the world of plurality is but a figment of imagination, a dream. Says our author: "He saw that the world is an imaginary thing. Like as one diffused through many members". "All these varied forms arise only from your fancy. They are but one point revolving quickly in a circle."

"You are asleep and this vision of yours is a dream.

All that you see thereby is an illusion.

On the morn of the last day, when you shall awake,

You will know all this to be the baseless fabric of fancy.

When the illusion of seeing double is removed

Earth and heaven will become transfigured.

When the true sun displays His face to you,

There remains not the light of Venus, moon or sun."<sup>1</sup>

#### MAN

Man, like the world, is nothing but God in essence, a reflector of God. Man's body is like a mirror and his soul is like a torch, an

<sup>1</sup> Gulshan i Raz, P. 18 Tr by Whinnell

both these reflect the same light of God. Just as the same sun shines through many windows so the same God is reflected through the plurality of mankind. Hence, "He", "I", "you" are all one in reality. The duality of "He" and "I" and the plurality of "I" and "you" are imaginary and vanish as soon as "I" is united with "He". When "I-ness" disappears, together with it disappear all distinctions of sects and creeds, all legal and religious obligations.

So long as a man remains distinct from God, there are elements of both good and evil in him, so that legal and religious authorities are necessary to restrain him from the evil course. But, after he becomes one with God, such restrictions are meaningless. Says our author,

"When this veil is lifted up from before you.

There remains not the bond of sects and creed,

All the authority of the law is over this "I" of yours.

Since that is bound to your soul and body.

When "I" and "you" remain not in the midst,

What is mosque, what is synagogue, what is fire temple?"

—(Whinfield)

Man's journey consists of two steps only—Journey to God, or reunion with the Absolute, casting off the phenomenal; and Journey with God from God, or abiding in God and being manifested in plurality again with Him. Hence the author says:—

"You are that plurality which becomes very unity

You are that unity which becomes very plurality."

—(Whinfield)

*Man's Descent and Ascent* The Course of God's descent has already been indicated. In the case of man, his body is first produced and then spirit is added to it. Next his will and motive powers are developed. When a child, he has the power of simple perceptions only, and is open to worldly temptations. Then gradually higher mental powers of reasoning are developed; anger, lust, pride etc. appear and he becomes worse than an animal. This is the lowest point of the descent. If a man remains stuck up here, he has no hope of salvation. But if through his own reasoning or divine illumination, he realises his imperfections, then his ascent begins. Then he is called a traveller, journeying back to God. The first step is repentance having four forms—turning from unbelief, from evil actions, from evil habits, from all but God. Then gradually, he attains to *fana* or annihilation of self in

God, consisting in the effacement of individual powers, will, knowledge and entire existence; and to persistence in God only (*baqa*). This is the stage of Perfect Man. The Perfect Man, again, journeys back to the world of plurality from God, with God, for the sake of serving humanity. Thus a man is subject to three journeys:—

(1) First, descent from God to phenomenal existence in the manner explained above. This is "Journey away from God".

(2) Secondly, ascent to God through the Mystic Path, union with Him, i.e. annihilation of the individual self and abiding in God. This is "Journey to God."

(3) Thirdly, re-descent to the phenomenal existence again. This is journey from God with God. "He finds eternal life after dying to self and again, He runs another course from his end to his beginning." Compare the Qu'ranic passage:—"God is the beginning, God is the end and to Him do we return." A man who is united with God needs no legal and religious restrictions. But a man who having journeyed to God redescends must obey religious and moral laws, in spite of his union with God. Such a man becomes the vicegerent of God on earth. He makes Law his upper garment and the Mystic Path his inner garment. He is endowed with the qualities of truth, knowledge, devotion and piety; but though in the world, he is not of it.

In fact, there are two kinds of travellers. (1) Those who attain to fana or self-annihilation and rest there, but do not return to the phenomenal world. They have to make only two journeys—journey away from God and journey to God. They are not subject to Law, as they remain absorbed in and intoxicated with God only, and have no connection whatsoever with the world. (2) Those who on obtaining God, return to the world. They have to make three journeys, as explained above. They return to sobriety after intoxication, and obey the Law in their second downward journey, as they did in their first upward journey, not for their own perfection, but for setting good examples to others. This class is more perfect than the former one, for such men help others to journey to God. Such men are either saints or prophets. The distinction between them is that the former have only to obey, the latter have to preach also. Saintship or drawing near to God through self annihilation is hidden in a saint, but manifest in a prophet. Adam was the first prophet, and Muhammad the last. Now saintship alone remains and will be completed with the appearance of *Muhammad Mehdi*, the twelfth Imam at the end of the world. A prophet is better than a saint—prophet is a sun, the saint a moon.

*Determinism.*

Shabistari rejects Free Will in toto, and propounds a doctrine of Sheer Determinism. He points out that when, under the influence of the phenomenal world, man regards himself as independent of God and as a second reality or principle besides Him, then alone is he, like Satan, filled with pride, and thinks himself a free agent, controlling his own body as a rider controls his horse. But this is nothing but an illusion, a mere figment of imagination, a play and a farce, and nothing more. The only free agent is God, and man is wholly and eternally determined by Him and Him alone. The fact is that man by himself is nothing—a mere non-being. So, how can any free will belong to him? Asks our author—

“How, O foolish man! can free will appertain  
To a person whose essence is nothingness?  
Seeing that your being is all one with non-being  
Say, whence comes this free will of yours?”<sup>1</sup>

The fact is that man was born not for fulfilling his own independent ends, but only for serving a Divine purpose, i.e. for reflecting God's essence, qualities and names. As such, the acts of man were predestined by God even before he came into existence. Thus, man has no free will, but is completely under God's command; and though seeming to be free, is yet really but a slave. But such an absolute imposition of Divine Will on human will is to be counted as neither a gross injustice nor a cruel oppression. On the contrary, it is a sure sign of Divine justice, mercy and grace. God has imposed His own Law on man simply because He has graciously chosen him to reflect His own essence. As man manifests Divine Essence, he has to manifest Divine Will also and forego, as a consequence, his own free will, his own human will and personality. This penalty that man has to pay for his exalted task of reflecting God must be taken in the proper spirit of what it really is, i.e., as a blessing and not as a punishment.

Further, according to Shabistari, God, though subjecting every one to predestined, inexorable laws, is Himself beyond all laws, as befitting an Absolute, Omnipotent Ruler. The questions of “how and why” cannot be raised in His case. He can do whatever He likes, and can, *if He so desires*, reward the evil and punish the good.

<sup>1</sup> Gulshan-i-Raz, Tr. by Whinfield, p. 54

*State of Union with God*

This has a negative and a positive side—fana or dying to self and baqa or living in God. 'Fana' has been explained above. "When you depart out, He will enter. In you, void of *yourself*, will He display His beauty."<sup>1</sup> This self-effacement must be preceded by a four-fold purification—from filthiness of the flesh, from sin and evil, from bad habits, from the secret thoughts of the heart. After these only can true journey to God begin. When the strain of egoity, of one's own phenomenal, individual being is completely removed from him, he becomes one pure essence, merged into the essence of God.

" There remains then no distinction,

Knower and Known are one and the same."<sup>2</sup>

Ordinary men can see only the attributes of God in the present world, and see His essence in the next world only. That is, though they realise the immanence of God in the world, they fail to realise their essential oneness with Him here and now. But saints and prophets can do so even here in this present world. Of course, all ordinary persons are not fit for even this much knowledge. Some of them are like men born blind possessing the faculty of reason only but lacking this capacity for knowing God, this internal faculty which only can produce a direct apprehension of reality, independently of reason. But others possess this special faculty in addition to reason and when the self is purified of the stain of 'otherness', this faculty leads to Divine illumination.

The saying of Hallaj 'I am the Truth', therefore, is literally true and can be uttered only by those who have thus directly experienced their oneness with God.

" Saying 'I am' belongs only to the Truth,

For essence is absent and illusive appearance is absent. .

The glory of the Truth admits no duality.

In that glory is no 'I' or 'we' or 'thou'.

'I', 'we', 'thou' and 'he' are all one thing.

For in unity there is no distinction of person."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Op-cit. p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> Op-cit., p. 46.

<sup>3</sup> Op-cit., p. 42.

Thus, when he reaches his goal, "travelling, travel and traveller all become one."<sup>1</sup> "Of a truth there is no other existence than the Truth", whether you say 'He is the Truth or I am the Truth' "<sup>2</sup>

Thus, on the negative side, the self loses its phenomenality. On the positive side, it abides in God, though not as a separate person. As snow melts in the sea and continues to exist, though not as an individual, separate something, as a rain-drop, absorbed in the ocean, is not annihilated, though it ceases to be a separate rain-drop, so the self, merged in God, is not annihilated, nor reduced to nothingness, but ceases to be a separate individual, having a personality, an essence of its own.

### Summary

Sufism as represented by Shabistari may be summarised as follows.

### *Being and Non-Being*

Ordinarily reason, the special attribute of man, is regarded as the highest faculty of man. It is so only in the phenomenal sphere. But as regards the ultimate Truth, it is nothing. The Truth can be known only by divine inspiration descended on the heart. To the divinely illumined heart, the world appears in its true colour—as a mere dream, as a mere figment of imagination, as an illusion, as an absolute non-entity, as an evil as such. The sole truth is God who is reflected on this Non-Being, so that the Non-Being appears to be Being, although it is not so in reality. In this sense, Non-being is both existent and non-existent. Hence, man's duty is to get rid of this Non-being, of the phenomenal world of plurality, of his own phenomenal self, which acts as a veil between him and God. That is, he has to *die to self* and to the world in order that he may *live in God*. In his upward progress, observance of external rites and rituals are not of much use, as they keep up the illusion of duality, of personal independence and free-will, personal merit and so on. On the contrary, the heart must be made absolutely passive, and the self must be killed before God's Light may stream forth into it and unite him with Himself, obliterating all distinctions between self and God. In this state of union, faith, reason, devotion, paradise all disappear, and the knower and the known, the lover and the beloved, the traveller and the goal all become one.

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit., p. 46.

<sup>2</sup> Op. cit., p. 42.



Such a perfect state of union cannot be attained by ordinary men, here and now, but only in the next world,<sup>1</sup> for here ecstasy and union are followed by sobriety and separation and the illusion of duality returns. Shabistari insists on the absolute nothingness of the world again and again. He compares the world to echoes, reflections, past and future time and fleeting accidents. Some verses about this have been quoted above. He points out that matter has no existence apart from length, breadth and depth which are all mere accidents, or those that do not endure for two moments. Hence, matter is but an absolute non-entity. Again, form has no existence apart from matter, so form, too, is non-existent. Now the entire universe consists of matter and form and hence it, too, is non-existent. In fact, "in itself it is neither existent nor non-existent."<sup>2</sup> It is not existent, because otherwise, it could not become non-existent; it is not non-existent, because otherwise, it could not become existent, even temporarily, to the unenlightened. The following are some further passages asserting the illusoriness of the Universe :—

" When the contingent wipes off the dust of contingency  
Nothing remains save Necessary Being.

The existence of the two worlds is as a dream,  
In the moment of eternity, they become naught."<sup>3</sup>

" In a moment this world passes away,  
None remains in the house save the Truth.  
At that moment you attain proximity  
You, stripped off 'self', are 'united' to the Beloved.  
Union here means the Cessation of the dream.  
When this dream passes away it is union."<sup>4</sup>

" There is no obstacle in your way but yourself. . .  
But reflect well on your own illusory existence."<sup>5</sup>

" How, O foolish man! Can free will asertain  
To a person whose essence is nothingness?"<sup>6</sup>

It may be asked : As the world, the Not-being is the manifestation, the transformation, the effect of God, the Being, the one cause of all, how can it be regarded as illusory? If Being be real, Not-Being into which it is transformed, must also be so. But Shabistari points

<sup>1</sup> Op-cit., p. 69.

<sup>3</sup> Op-cit., p. 48.

<sup>6</sup> Op-cit., p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> Op-cit., p. 49.

<sup>4</sup> Op-cit., p. 52.

<sup>6</sup> Op-cit., p. 54.

out that Being does not actually become Non-Being. Being is the sole Truth, Not-being is but an empty name, a mere reflection, that disappears on the rise of true mystic knowledge :

“ Not-Being to become existent—this is impossible,  
But real Being in point of existence is imperishable.  
Neither does this become that, nor that this.  
All difficulties are now plain before you.  
The whole world is merely an imaginary thing :  
It is like one point whirled round a circle.  
Go ! whirl round a single spark of fire.  
And from its quick motion you will see a circle.  
Though one be counted again and again,  
Yet surely one becomes not many by this counting.  
Cast away the saying : ‘What is other than Allah?  
By your own reason separate that from this.  
How can you doubt that this is a dream?  
For duality by the side of unity is a pure delusion.  
Not-Being is single like Being.  
All plurality proceeds from attribution.”<sup>1</sup>

The process of creation of the phenomenal world is an eternal one. Figuratively, it may be described as a drop of water, raised from the sea of Being in mist, poured down as rain, converted into plants, animals and men and then reabsorbed in the sea again. In this way, phenomena are being constantly annihilated in God and thus regaining their union with Him.

### *Doctrine of Universal Momentariness*

Shabistari propounds the doctrine of Universal Momentariness. The phenomenal world is being destroyed and created afresh every moment. During the phenomenal state, man is a mixture of Being and Non-Being, and as such neither existent nor non-existent, like the world. It is not existent or permanent as its non-being, its creature-state is not so; it is not non-existent, as it is not a non-existent entity altogether, but enjoys a kind of phenomenal existence for a time. Now, although Non-Being prevents him from reaching Being, yet the spark of Being in him kindles up a strong desire and love for God.

<sup>1</sup> Op-cit, p. 70.

which ultimately burns up the phenomenal state and makes him one with God. In fact, there is no question of any communion between God and man. So long as God and man are distinct entities, there cannot be any contact or connection between them. Man must cease to be a man before he can have any connection with God.

### *Law and Truth*

As regards the relation of Law and Truth, Law is the outer shell, Truth the pearl within it. The Sufi must extract the pearl out, but must not break the shell prematurely. That is, obedience to external religious laws is necessary till one attains the Truth. But such works are of no great value in the spiritual ascent of man. Mere good works, mere legal and formal ceremonies do not by themselves sanctify a man; on the contrary, from his own saintly disposition good works flow spontaneously. This is due to God's own grace, not to man's own works. Thus, works are necessary in the *journey away from God* for the good of the man himself; and also in the *journey from God with God* for the good of others; but not in the *intermediate journey to God*, when the best thing is to give up self-will and live in God's will alone.

### *State of Union*

As regards the state of union, there are four classes of men:—(1) Those who fail ever to attain it, here or hereafter; (2) Those who attain it partially only here, but completely hereafter, knowing God's attributes only in the present life, His essence in the next life. (3) Those who realise God completely here, but only for a short time. (4) Those who realise God completely here, and permanently too, viz. saints and prophets

### *Incarnation*

As pointed out above, Shabistari rejects the doctrine of Incarnation of God in man. So long as man remains a man, a phenomenal creature only, a mixture of Being and Non-Being, there cannot be any union, any identity, any commingling between God and man, so that no incarnation is then possible. Again, when man ceases to be a man, he becomes one with God, with his own essence merged in the essence of God, so that he can no longer incarnate God, for incarnation implies duality—it means the *embodiment of the Divine in the human* and here we have nothing human left. Hence, Shabistari says:—

"Incarnation and communion spring from the 'other'  
Neither does the Truth become a creature, nor  
is a creature united with Allah.  
Incarnation and communion are both impossible here.  
For duality in unity is clearly absurd.  
The existence of creatures and plurality is but a semblance,  
And not everything that seems to be really is." <sup>1</sup>

Shabistari ends by pointing out that the Sufis are ever ready to accept what is good in other religions, like Idol-worship, Christianity and Magianism (Fire-worship). These latter are good trainings for one who fails to realise the essential unity of God. "Idol-worship" he says is essentially unification." <sup>2</sup> That is, when a man worships an Idol, that Idol is taken by him as a manifestation of God, and God's manifestation cannot be an evil. In the same manner "Christianity aims at purification from self, deliverance from yoke of bondage."

## X Faridu'-Din Attar

In him, too, we find the same stress on the unity of all existence, phenomenality of the world of plurality, and self-annihilation of the individual soul in the Divine Soul. In one place, he says,

"The world is full of Thee and Thou art not in the world

All are lost in Thee and Thou art not in the midst"

Here, absolute transcendence is combined with universal immanence

After emphasising the identity of God and man, He says—  
"Water is water in the boundless ocean, in the jug, too, it is the same water." "But, for the men of Perfect knowledge, outside of God, of Power and Glory, nothing exists." The idea of self-annihilation is clearly propounded in his "Mantiq-Al-Tayr," an allegorical poem. Here birds, under the direction and leadership of Hoopoe, the Solomon of birds, decide to proceed on a quest of Simurgh, their mysterious king. But so sooner has the quest been decided upon, they begin to make excuses for their inability to go, representing human excuses for putting off spiritual quest, and are finally persuaded by the wise Hoopoe to undertake the journey. Hoopoe explains to them that they have to pass successively through Seven valleys. The first is the Valley of

<sup>1</sup> Op-cit., p. 46

<sup>2</sup> Op cit., p 88.

Search. Here, the Traveller has to face all sorts of trials and calamities, and renounce all earthly desires. The second is the Valley of Love. At this stage, he is consumed with a desire for the Beloved alone, and hankers after Him alone. Here, he gives up all reasoning, and gives himself up to this ocean of Love only. The third is the Valley of Knowledge or Gnosis. Here, the heart of the Traveller receives Divine Illumination and has a direct realisation of God. The fourth is the Valley of Detachment, in which he becomes free from all desires whatsoever, even from that of knowing Divine Mysteries. The fifth is the Valley of Unification where all phenomenal distinctions of "I", "Thou" and "He" disappear, and God's unity is fully realised. The sixth is the Valley of Bewilderment, in which the Traveller becomes confused as to his own real nature. Having realised God's oneness he loses himself completely, and does not know whether he is existent or non-existent, within or without, manifest or hidden, annihilated or subsistent. The seventh is the valley of Annihilation, where he loses himself completely in God, as a rain-drop in the sea, and becomes one with Him. Finally, only thirty birds reach the abode of Simurgh and are amazed to find that Simurgh is none other than their own selves, the thirty birds (si-thirty; murgh-birds).

The passage goes as follows:—

"When they looked, that was the Simurgh: without doubt that Simurgh was those thirty birds. (Si murgh).

All were bewildered with amazement, not knowing whether they were this or that.

They perceived themselves to be naught-else but the Simurgh, while the Simurgh was not else than the thirty birds (Si murgh).

When they looked towards the Simurgh, it was indeed the Simurgh which was there.

While when they looked towards themselves, they were Si murgh (thirty birds) and that was the Simurgh.

And if they looked both together, both were the Simurgh, neither more nor less.

This "one" was "that", that "one" "this", the like of this hath no one heard in the world."<sup>1</sup>

Thus, Attar insists on an Absolute Monism, on an Abstract Unity, devoid of all relations and adjuncts.

<sup>1</sup> For the entire passage, see Browne's *Literary History of Persia*, p. 514, vol 2

## XI Jalalud-Din Rumi

### *Logical Thinking*

Rumi expresses himself, as Whinfield points out, in "the language of emotion and imagination rather than in that of the intellect." Like other mystics, Rumi, too, disowns reason as an instrument of the knowledge of noumenal reality. Reason can know phenomena only, about things in space and time, but Reality is beyond all spatial and temporal categories. Secondly, we know things by comparison and contrast—logical knowledge is essentially relative in character involving assimilation to like things and discrimination from unlike things. E.g. light is known as contrasted from darkness and so on. But there is nothing outside the all-comprehending One with which it may be compared. Thirdly, thought itself is a created thing, and a created thing cannot know its own Creator. Hence, transcendental entities like the essence of God, the unitive state and so on are not accessible to reason. These can neither be logically inferred, nor verbally expressed, but can only be directly experienced and felt through mystic insight. He says:—

"The story admits of being told up to this point.

But what follows is hidden, and inexpressible in words.

If you should speak and try a hundred ways to express it.

'Tis useless, the mystery becomes no clearer."<sup>1</sup>

Further, reason fails to grasp the fundamental unity of all existence as it cannot transcend the duality of subject and object. As Rumi points out: "There is a squint in the eye of the intellect which makes it always see double."

### *God*

God possesses the attributes of life, power, knowledge, and love. He is infinitely merciful, yet His mercy is quite distinct from human mercy, which involves pain and grief. God's nature and attributes are really incomprehensible by human thought. Rumi recounts the story of an elephant exhibited by some Indians in a dark room. Being unable to see it, people began to touch it. He who touched the trunk

<sup>1</sup> Masnavi Tr. by Whinfield p 326.

thought the elephant to be a water pipe; he who touched its ears thought it a large fan and so on. In the same manner, man's knowledge of God is partial and one-sided; and the partial knowledge too, being essentially relative, as shown above, does not represent the true nature of God as He is in Himself, but supplies us only with a rough analogy, which must be taken as such, not as anything more.

### *The Soul*

Against the orthodox view, which regards the soul as essentially created, Rumi holds that the soul is eternal like God. Hence the soul was not created and God is not his creator. "A Sufi", says Rumi, "has no God, he is not created." He also stresses the unity of souls. Souls appear to be plural, but really they are all one in essence. Plurality can belong only to the world of Nature, to the phenomenal world, but not to the soul which is beyond the phenomenal world of time and space. He likens the soul to the light, which remains the same although it is manifested differently by different lamps. Compare the following passage from his *Masnavi* "If you have in the house ten lamps though each be different in form, the light of one cannot be distinguished from that of another. In the realm of spirit, all of us were one eternal substance like the sun, clear and without knots like water." Again, he compares the souls to waves of the same sea and beams of the same sun entering different windows. Compare: "When from among them you see two friends, they are one and three hundred thousand at the same time. Their multiplicity is like that of the waves caused by the wind. The sun of the souls has been split up in the windows of the bodies. Differences are found out in the animal soul, the human soul is only one. God had said He sprinkled His Light upon them, and Divine Light cannot be broken up."

The soul is quite distinct from the phenomenal world, but when it wrongly identifies itself with physical and psychical phenomena, it seems to undergo all their states and conditions. The soul is a pure substance, while the physical and psychical phenomena are its attributes. To get the pure essence of the soul, one must abstract away from all these non-selves. Every night the soul is let free from its bondage of the body, of the world, and free from all limiting attributes and adjuncts, it regains its pure essence. But the soul of the gnostic and the real knower is dead to self and world even during the waking hours.

*Creation and Evolution*

These transcendental questions, Rumi points out, cannot be solved by logical reasoning. We can have only mere approximate ideas about these things through symbols and analogies, which, of course, must not be taken too literally. He likens the universe to the back of a mirror of which the front is the soul. Hence, matter is not an independent substance, but only an aspect of the soul, or rather a lower grade of the soul, and the body is the product of the soul, an instrument manufactured by it for its own purposes. Matter is the lowest form of existence, but it is not essentially dead, but the lowest form of life. Rumi here propounds the doctrine of Evolution. Throughout the ages, he points out, the soul is gradually developing to higher and higher forms. At first, it is born as matter and lives as fire, water, wind and cloud. Then it becomes a plant, then an animal, then man, and its progress is not yet stopped, but it will become an angel after death, and after that, one with God. "Pass on even from angelhood," says Rumi, "enter that sea, that your drop of water may become a boundless ocean." This evolution of the higher from the lower, or the transition of the lower into the higher is due to the inner necessity of the lower to fulfil and perfect itself, to the divine urge, the will to live that is inherent in every atom of the universe. It is this urge that leads the lower to assimilate itself into the higher. Matter, thus, is assimilated by a plant and thereby becomes a plant; a plant is assimilated by an animal and becomes an animal; and an animal is assimilated by a man, becoming a man thereby. Man, in his turn, should try to get assimilated by an angel, and the angel by God, becoming one with Him at long last. The logical difficulty here is that if matter becomes a plant only by being assimilated by it, then the plant precedes and does not succeed matter, so that the very first process of evolution becomes unintelligible. In any case, the universe is conceived to be a process of constant movements, constant struggle for self-development, a constant "dying to live." God is constantly active, creating something new at every moment; and every created object too, is constantly active, striving to rise higher. Now the motive force, the inner necessity behind all these movement, is love. Creation is nothing but the descent of the uncreated soul from God, the separation of the lover from his Beloved—the why and how of which are beyond the grasp of human reason. The soul is, however, clearly conscious of this pang of separation, and through love, tries to go back to its Beloved. Evolu-



tion is nothing but this ascent of man to God. So, we have a complete circle here—descent of God to man, ascent of man to God, and the establishment of the original identity between the two. And love is the force that impels this evolution of the lower into the higher, until man, born as matter, is finally merged into God.

Thus, the world is phenomenal no doubt, but not illusory. It is a passing phase, but one that is essential to the upward progress of the soul. So the phenomenal is a bridge to the Real.

### *The Goal*

The goal of man, as pointed out above, is the re-union of man with God. This re-union consists, as usual, in fana or self-annihilation and baqa or persistence through God. 'Fana' means annihilation of the attributes of the individuals, not of his essence. 'Baqa' means assuming the attributes of God and living in Him, without losing his own individuality. Thus, the individual becomes one with God in *attributes*, still retaining his separate *essence* or individuality. Rumi gives numerous illustrations to make the point clear. (i) The analogy of an organism is often used by him. The relation of the released soul to God is just like that between an organ and the whole organism. An organ has no separate existence or attributes, but lives through the existence and attributes of the whole organism; yet it has an essence of its own. In the same manner, all the released souls live in God and share His attributes, but are still individually and essentially different. (ii) He also gives the illustration of candles or stars, losing themselves in the morning light. When the sun appears, the lights of candles and stars disappear and exist and yet do not exist. They exist because their *essences remain—they are there all the time as substances or objects*. E.g. the flame of the candle exists as proved by the fact that if cotton is put over it, it is burnt off, still the flame does not exist because it has lost its attributes of luminosity in the attribute of the sun. In the same manner, the united self retains its essence, losing its human attributes only. "The essence of his being survives," says Rumi, "but his attributes are merged in the attributes of God." (iii) Rumi also uses the analogy of fire and iron. The iron, put into fire, loses its own colour and coldness and assumes the red-hot colour and heat of the fire, still it is not reduced to the essence of the fire. (iv) Sometimes, he describes this state of union as the transformation of copper into gold. It is abundantly clear from the above illustrations that

Rumi does not regard the state of union with God as the destruction of the personality of the soul. This state is nothing but the transformation of the lower self into the higher self. The lower, base, human attributes disappear to be replaced by the divine attributes; and the soul, purged of all its phenomenal attributes, regains its own transcendental, spiritual self or divine essence. Thus, although man is divine in essence, as the spirit of God Himself has been breathed into him, yet his personality is something indestructible, and there is always a difference between man and God, and between man and man in *essence* though not in *attributes*. Thus, God is to be conceived as an organism, a concrete Unity, containing within Him a plurality of essentially different yet divine souls. Of course, Rumi is careful to point out in every case that analogies are only rough descriptions, and must not be stressed too much or taken literally.

Thus the sum and substance of Rumi's view of the unitive state is that the freed man is divine both in essence and attributes, still he remains different from God in essence, but becomes non-different from Him in attributes. This seems rather contradictory.

In any case, it is in the above sense alone, not in the sense of absolute essential identity, does the enraptured devotee deny that he is anything and affirm that he is everything, even God. Rumi does both. Compare :—

- (i) "Lo, for I to myself am unknown, now in God's name  
What must I do?

I adore not the cross nor the crescent, I am not a  
Giaour, nor a Jew.

East nor West, land nor sea is my home, I have kin nor  
with angel, nor with gnome" etc.

Here the man, united with God, is completely dead to the  
world, and so the world means nothing to him at all.

- But, (ii) "If there be any lover in the world, O Moslems! 'tis I.  
If there be any believer, infidel or Christian hermit, 'tis I.  
The wine-dregs, the cup-bearer, the minstrel, and the music,  
The beloved, the candle, the drink and the joy of the  
drunken—'tis I." etc.

Again "I am the theft of the rogues, I am the  
pain of the sick.

I am both cloud and rain, I have rained

In the meadows." (Tr. by Nicholson).

Here he has realised the underlying Unity of all existence and everything is divine to him. Consistently with the above explanation, all these passages can only mean that everything is *qualitatively* identical, not *essentially*. As we have seen, according to Rumi, all souls are essentially one—so this must lead to strict Monism. But Rumi does not draw this logical conclusion, but regards the soul as retaining its separate existence.

Again (iii) "O my soul, I searched from end to end :

I saw in thee naught save the Beloved ;

Call me not infidel, O my soul, if I

Say that thou thyself art He."

"Ye who in search of God, of God,

pursue

Ye need not search for God, for God,

is you, is you.

Why seek ye something that was missing

ne'er?

Save you none is, but you are—where

Oh ! where?"

Here also, the identity of God and soul must mean not *essential* identity, but *qualitative* identity only.

Some passages in Rumi, nevertheless, seem to suggest that in union the self is, of course, not annihilated, but its personality or individuality disappears. E.g. the soul is likened to a drop of water and God to a boundless sea where the soul has to merge itself, that being the climax of evolution. Or take the passage,

"Happy the moment when we are seated in the

Palace, thou and I.

With two forms and with two figures, but with

one soul, thou and I.

Thou and I, individuals no more, shall be

mingled in ecstasy."

Further, he himself says that Absolute unity of God excludes all plurality and relations which are temporal categories only, not applicable to transcendental sphere.

This also is the logical conclusion of the doctrine of the unity of spirit. The illustrations given by Rumi himself seem to suggest the view that there is only one Reality and all plurality is due to mere appearance. Thus, God is the sea, the souls, waves raised by the wind; God is the flame, the bodies of souls, lamps containing it; God is the sun; the bodies of souls, the windows through which the sun-beams filter in. These seem to imply that essentially all men are identical with one another and with God, only differentiated temporarily through the phenomenal attributes and adjuncts like bodies etc. But Rumi does not draw this logical conclusion from his own premises.

### *The Means*

#### Love (Ishq)

As pointed out above, love draws man near God, leads to the gradual assimilation of the lower by the higher, until man becomes one with God.

Thus, love is not an individual sentiment only, but a cosmic force, the beginning and the end of life. It is difficult, Rumi points out, to define love, for love can be felt only, not adequately described or taught. Rumi says: "The motion of every atom is towards its origin. A man comes to be the thing on which he is bent. By the attraction and fondness and yearning, the soul and the heart assume the qualities of the Beloved, who is the soul of souls."

Love is not intellectual, but opposed to reason. Reason, from its very nature, is analytic and as such fails to see the essential unity of Being. But love, which is supra-rational, is a kind of immediate intuition, a kind of direct feeling about the unity of Being, in the midst of all plurality. Love transcends external religious laws, but is itself the real essence of religion. Hence, a man who has experienced this sublime feeling of love is truly religious whether he strictly observes the orthodox dogmas or not.

### *The Perfect Man*

When a man completes the circle by ascending to God and being united with Him in the manner explained above, he is called the Perfect Man or the Man of God. He is the final goal of Creation and the end of the process of evolution. Such a state of perfection is possible even here and now. The following is a description of the Perfect Man given by Rumi.

" The man of God is made wise by the Truth.

*The man of God is not learned from book.*

The man of God is beyond infidelity and faith

To the man of God right and wrong are alike."

(Tr. by Nicholson).

The knowledge of the Perfect Man is not rational knowledge, but supra-rational illumination. His pure heart is like a mirror where God is reflected in full. That is, God reveals Himself to him, and through this revelation he comes to know immediately all mysteries of things supra-sensuously. The Perfect Man is identical with the Universal Reason, the first emanation from God, and as such a cosmic principle, creating and governing the universe. He is in immediate touch with God, and represents God on earth, although he must not be taken to be an incarnation of God. He assumes divine qualities, is *completely dead to his own phenomenal self, and has completely merged* his own will in the supreme will of God. As such, he exists and also does not exist. He does not exist as a human self, endowed with divine attributes. *He is endowed with miraculous powers.*

Now, who is such a Perfect Man? The first Perfect Man was Adam, and after that in every age some one is attaining to this state, and every one is entitled to it. Such a man may be called a prophet or a saint who are practically the same. Here Rumi takes a very bold stand against the orthodox view of Prophethood. The orthodox Islam is very particular on this point. According to it, of the twelve prophets Muhammad was the last and the most perfect, and prophethood came to an end with him, and there cannot be any more direct revelation of God to men. The Sufis were, however, reluctant to accept this view that there cannot be any longer any direct contact between God and man; so they propounded the doctrine of sainthood, regarding the saints as receiving a direct communion from God. Some of them (cf. Hujwiri and Kalabadhi) tried to placate the orthodox view by pointing out that saints are inferior to prophets, as the former are united with God only temporarily, the latter permanently. Some, again, try to get out of the difficulty by bringing forward the theory of the two aspects of the Prophets. The Prophet, they hold, has two aspects—prophethood and sainthood. *The former involves turning towards both God and world, while the latter involves turning towards God only.* As such, sainthood is superior to prophethood. But Rumi boldly cancels this distinction between prophethood and sainthood, and holds that any

and everyone can become a prophet or a saint. This denial of the finality of the Prophethood of Muhammad and this assertion of the universality of prophethood realisable by any and every man, are diametrically opposed to the fundamental tenet of the Islam. Hence some of the Sufis, paradoxically enough, though asserting their identity with God, declared at the same time their inferiority to prophets. E.g. Bayazid, after ninety thousand years of journey through the realm of divine mysteries, found his head at the foot of a prophet and realised that the end of sainthood is the beginning of prophethood and this latter had no end. Here Rumi takes a bold new stand. The saint (wali) is not subject to ordinary laws. His hand, Rumi points out, is as the hand of God, and hence he cannot be judged by ordinary codes and conventions. He stands as an intermediary between God and man, and God reveals himself to others through the saints only. As such, a saint is not only a cosmic, but also a moral force. Says Rumi, "The mosque that is built in the heart of saints is the place of worship for all, for God dwells there." <sup>1</sup>

### *Freedom of will*

Rumi insists on the freedom of will which is peculiar to man only. The natural laws are predestined, and as such, man, too, as a natural and physical being, is subject to these laws, and as such predetermined to that extent. But as a moral being, he has free choice to decide between alternative courses of action; otherwise, morality, reward and punishment become meaningless. Rumi insists that God is not an arbitrary ruler, but is essentially just and impartial. He rewards and punishes man according to his own works. Every act is sure to bring about its own result, and is determined to that extent. But man's choice with regard to that act is not predestined. E.g. it is predestined that virtue will bring its own reward and vice its own punishment; but whether a man will choose virtue or vice is not so. True freedom is not the power of acting arbitrarily just as one likes, but it is self-determination, the compulsion of the lower self by the higher self, the inward urge in us that makes man merge his will in the Divine will. The universal urge, as we have seen, is nothing but Love. Hence, in love alone is found the perfect freedom, which is but another name for self-imposed, voluntary compulsion. No external force compels a lover to act according to the will of his beloved, but he freely, out of his

<sup>1</sup> *Masnawi*. Tr. by Whinfield, p. 100.

love forces himself to do so—in fact, here the opposition between freedom and compulsion disappears in the depth and unity of his feeling. Here, when he is obeying his beloved's command, he is doing so voluntarily through the inner necessity of love. In the same manner, a man is really free when he loves God so perfectly as to make His will his own without any external compulsion. There cannot be any relation of coercion between God and man as between lovers. Says Rumi :—

“ The word compulsion makes me impatient for love's sake,  
 'Tis only he who loves not that is fettered by compulsion.  
 This is communion with God, not compulsion.”

—(Nicholson)

Rūmī is definitely against Quietism, so markedly present in early Sufism especially. He points out that God Himself is essentially and constantly active, and hence He loves man's activity as well. Man has free will, and he has to work out his destiny for himself. It is a wrong religious attitude to resign one's self to God and do nothing. Trust in God is not inconsistent with personal striving.

### *Problem of Evil*

Evil, in relation to God, is a non-being, but in relation to man it is very real, though a phenomenal and a passing phase. Nothing in this world is either good or evil by itself, but everything is so only relatively. What is good for one may not be so for others; what is good under certain circumstances may not be so under others. A thing or an action is, thus, to be judged by the end towards which it is to be directed, but goodness or badness is not inherent in it. A question may be asked as to why God has created evils. The answer is that everything can be manifested only by its opposite. Good can be manifested only by evil. In fact, moral life requires the antithesis of good and evil. Moral striving requires that there should be different alternatives open before man, so that he may freely choose one and reject others. Virtue and self-conquest are impossible if there be no evil. Man is placed in between beasts and angels. To animals, good and evil are meaningless—they are amoral and natural. To angels, evil is impossible—they are supramoral. But man can choose either good or evil,—rise above angels or sink below beasts. Hence, evil is necessary for the full development of the personality of man. Rumi, like Ghazali, is a convinced optimist, but he does not carry his optimism to the extreme by

denying the very existence of evil. But he insists that much evil is only apparent and that nothing is absolutely bad from its very nature.

## XII Sa'di

In Sa'di mysticism becomes somewhat subordinated to strong ethical didactic and practical interest. Although his works abound in pious sentiments, he lacks the lofty flight of imagination into the realms of the Unseen,—the visionary qualities which are the special marks of a mystic. His famous works "Gulistan" and "Bhustan" are both ethical in character. But his ethics is, for the most part, an ethics of expediency rather than of real virtue. As the present work is concerned mainly with the philosophical doctrines of Sufism, and as Sa'di propounds no new philosophical tenets, we refrain from entering into details here.

## XIII Jili

Jili propounds the doctrine of Perfect Man in his famous book "Al-Insanu'l-Kamil" (The Man Perfect),<sup>1</sup> also propounded by the famous Sufi teacher Ibnu'l-'Arabi.

### *The Absolute*

The Absolute is Pure Being, a Pure Essence, a Pure Substance. Being, Essence or Substance is something to which attributes and names are given, and it is of two kinds—existent or existing actually, and non-existent (subsistent) or existing in name only, like the fabulous bird 'Anqa'. Again, the former is of two kinds—pure existence or Pure Being, viz. God; and existence joined with non-existence, viz. the world.

### *God's Essence*

Pure Being or Pure Essence of God (Dhat) cannot be grasped by intellect, because to the intellect it appears to be a bundle of contradictions—an existence that is non-existence. It has two attributes—creativity (God) and creaturliness (world); two accidents—eternity and everlastingness; two descriptions—uncreatableness and creatableness; two names—Lord (God) and slave (man); two aspects—outward and visible (the present world) and inward and invisible (the next world);

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Nicholson's *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*.



two effects—necessity and contingency; two standpoints—non-existence for itself and existence for other, and existence for itself and non-existence for other. God's pure Essence is something to which belong attributes and names, as they really are and not as they appear in the world. But Pure Being, by itself is devoid of all attributes and names. It is only when it descends from its absoluteness and is manifested in the phenomenal world that attributes and names appear. Being is one, and all attributes, relations and differences are but manifestations of the very same Being. Like Hegel, Jili, too, holds that Being is identical with Thought, and the world is nothing but the manifestation of Divine Thought. The world-process is the process through which the Absolute becomes manifested to and conscious of itself. (See below).

### *God's attributes*

An attribute is a thing through which the state of the thing may be known. God's attributes are forms in which He manifests Himself and through which He may be known. But His attributes are not really different from His essence. In the phenomenal world, in the realm of manifestation, of course, the distinction between essence and attribute is tenable; but really they are identical. There is no unknown and unknowable 'thing-in-itself', substance or essence behind the attributes, but the essence itself is the attributes.

Jili propounds a peculiar theory about the unknowability of attributes. Although he defines an attribute as that through which the state of a substance becomes known, yet he holds that an attribute by itself cannot be perceived and known, only its effect can be done so. E.g. when we see a man, we do not perceive his attributes, although we believe or know that he possesses them. Here we see only his essence as a whole, even though we may not know many of his qualities. All that we can perceive is the effects of his attributes, not the attributes themselves as such, because these remain hidden in the essence and cannot be separated from it. E.g. if a man be healthy, his attribute of health by itself cannot be perceived, but remains merged in the general essence of the man. The effects of health, however, such as, buoyancy, cheerfulness etc. can be perceived. Or, the attribute of charity cannot be seen, only its effect, viz. giving to the poor, may be done so. This will land us in the situation that the effect of an attribute is somehow different from the attribute itself. The effect 'red colour' of the attribute of 'redness', possessed by a 'red ball,' is different

from the attribute itself. And, as the essence is identical with the attributes, even the essence cannot be known at all. To assert that essence and attribute are one and the same, yet only the essence is known, not the attribute, is self-contradictory. In any case, Jili holds that even in the state of Union, man feels that he is the Essence and thus knows intuitively the Essence only, not its attributes.

### *God's Names*

A name is something that fixes the named in the understanding, paints it in the mind, presents it to the judgement and keeps it in the memory. Thus, through the name, the unknown object becomes known. Hence, the name is the outward aspect of the named, and, as such, identical with it. There are two kinds of names—those that are mere empty names with no corresponding reality, (viz. "Anqa"), and those that stand for real objects. Divine names, too, are of two kinds—names of Essence, e.g. al-Ahad (the One); and names of attributes, e.g. al-Rahman (the Merciful), al-Alim (the Knowing). Each of these latter stands for one particular aspect of the Essence, and produces an effect in the phenomenal world. Thus, thought, feeling, action, etc. all proceed from these Divine names. The highest name of God is "Allah" which comprises all attributes and names of God. God has made this name, says Jili, a mirror for man through which he comes to know the real nature of God's Unity.

### *Ontology*

#### *Creation or the Descent (tanazzul) of the Absolute*

Creation is nothing but the gradual individualisation of the Absolute, the process through which Pure Being comes to have various attributes and relations. Ontologically, it has three stages:— (1) The first stage is the stage of Pure Being, devoid of all attributes, relations, modes and adjuncts. Such a Pure Essence has an inner and an outer aspect. The inner aspect is called 'dark mist' or 'blindness' (al-'Ama). In this state, Pure Essence is wholly sunk in itself, and its relation to outwardness, i.e. to itself as the 'other', is wholly negated. Hence, it is a state of bare potentiality, "the immanent negativity" of the Essence. The outer aspect is called "the abstract notion of oneness" (Ahadiyya). In this state, the Essence knows Himself as a transcendent Unity. Here, also, no manifestations

actually appear, still it is the first step towards these. The inward and outward aspects are opposed to each other, but are reconciled in the Absolute.

(2) The second stage is, thus, the stage of Abstract Oneness (Ahadiyya), having an inner and an outer aspect. The inner aspect is called "He-ness" (Huwiyya), the absence of the attributes of the Essence. Here, Being is conscious of itself as negating the Many. The outer aspect is called "I-ness" (Aniyya). Here, Being is conscious of itself as the truth of the Many.

(3) The third stage is the stage of Concrete Oneness or Unity-in-plurality. (Wahidiyya). This is the stage of the actual manifestations of the Absolute in the world of plurality; in the Hegelian language, "the self-diremption of the Absolute Idea". Here the darkness of Pure Being is overcome and illuminated, and the potential becomes actual, the Absolute becomes conscious of itself, identifying itself as One with itself as Many.

Here Jili follows a method resembling the Hegelian Dialectic. In the first stage of Pure Being, there is an opposition between the inner and outward aspects of the Absolute as knowing nothing and as knowing itself as bare unity. This is transcended and reconciled in the synthesis of Abstract Oneness, the second stage of the Absolute. This, again, resolves itself into a pair of opposites, viz. He-ness or "Many submerged in the One" and I-ness or "One manifested in the Many", which, in their turn, are re-united in the third stage of Unity-in-plurality, in which "essence is manifested as attribute and attribute as essence", and all distinctions between attributes disappear, and mercy and vengeance are the same.

### Theology

#### *The Absolute and Divinity*

As shown above, God has two aspects—unmanifested and manifested. As the former, He is Pure Being or Essence without any attributes; as the latter, He is the sum of attributes. The unmanifested Pure Essence is generally called the Absolute, while the highest manifestation of the Absolute is Divinity (Ilahiyya) or Allah, comprising all that is manifested, the sum of the attributes of the Essence. The Absolute has no relation and is not a creator, as nothing has as yet been created. But Divinity is the Creator (al-Haqq) in relation to

created things (al-Khalq). Divinity being the sum of attributes is invisible, though its effects are visible everywhere. The last stage of the Absolute is Unity-in-plurality (Wahidiyya); while the stage of Divinity (Ilahiyya) is plurality-in-unity. Hence, logically, the latter must follow the former. But Jili does not follow this logical method in his Theology. He identifies Allah with the Absolute and gives the following line of descent from the point of view of Theology:— (1) Divinity (Ilahiyya); (2) Abstract Oneness (Ahadiyya); (3) Unity-in-plurality (Wahidiyya); (4) Mercifulness (Rahmaniyya); (5) Lordship (Rububiyya). Divinity comprises all the creative and creaturely attributes. The former are those peculiar to the Essence, such as abstract oneness, unity-in-plurality etc., as well as those peculiar to the creator, viz. life, knowledge, power, will, speech, hearing and sight. Mercifulness comprises only the creative attributes. The first mercy of God is that He creates the world out of Himself, makes the world His mirror, and manifests Himself in every atom, still Himself remaining one and indivisible. Lordship comprises relative attributes like mastery, knowledge etc. and as such presupposes a necessary relation between God and Man.

Divine attributes are of four kinds:—(1) Attributes of the Essence, e.g. one, eternal, real. (2) Attributes of Beauty (Jamal), e.g. forgiving, knowledge, guiding aright. (3) Attributes of Majesty (Jalal), e.g. almighty, revengeful, leading astray. (4) Attributes of Perfection (Kamal), e.g. exalted, wise, first and last, outward and inward. Each attribute produces an effect, in which beauty, majesty or perfection is manifested. E.g. the objects of knowledge are effects of the name "Knows". Every existent thing displays all the attributes of beauty and some of the attributes of majesty. Heaven is the manifestation of absolute beauty, Hell of absolute majesty, the universe of both.

### *The World*

The process of creation is nothing but the manifestation of the attributes of the Absolute Essence, and the sum of these attributes is the universe. As essence and attributes are identical, the universe is identical with God. It is phenomenal, but not unreal. It is phenomenal in the sense that it is the outward manifestation of the essence of God, but it really exists as the objectification of Divine Thought. In fact, God and world are correlative. "We ourselves are the attributes by which we describe God", says 'Arabi, holding the same view,

"our existence is merely an objectification of His existence. God is necessary to us in order that we may exist; while we are necessary to Him in order that He may be manifested to Himself."

As Being is identical with Thought, and as the world is nothing but the self-manifestation and self-knowing of Being, thought is the very stuff of the universe. The world is the idea of God through which he comes to know Himself. Jili attempts to prove it thus: We believe in God and in His attributes and names. Thus, God becomes manifested to us in our belief. But belief itself inheres in thought, thought being the locus of the belief. Hence, God is manifested in thought. Now, God's manifestation is the world. Hence the world is manifested in thought. Thus, the world inheres in thought and originates from it. It is an idea, like a dream, but it is not unreal; it is only "reality as presented to itself through and in the cosmic consciousness of the Perfect Man." Jili compares the world to sleep or dream-experience simply for showing that it inheres wholly in Thought, like the object of dream-experience, and has no independent objective existence, as the object of waking experience appears to have. Thus, Jili holds with Berkeley that a thing is but a sum of attributes behind which there is no separate substance, and attributes are nothing but clusters of ideas in the mind; hence, a thing exists only so far as it is thought of; or, in other words, a thing is a thought. But Jili transcends mere Subjective Idealism and rises to the Objective Idealism of Hegel by pointing out that the world is a thought, no doubt, but not a thought of an individual mind, but of God, or which is the same thing, of the Perfect Man who objectifies all the attributes of God. To the Perfect Man, the material world is really ideal in essence, the sum of all the Divine attributes, and as such identical in essence with God, with himself, but to other ordinary men, the material world appears to be quite different from God and from themselves.

Thus, in short, according to Jili, the process of creation is nothing but the process of God's knowing Himself, and the created universe is nothing but God's idea about Himself. He says: "Thought is the life of the spirit of the Universe: it is the foundation of that life, and its foundation is Man. To him that knows Thought through the power of the Almighty, existence is nothing but a thought". Again He describes the Universe also as "a thought within a thought".

God brings the world into being by His attribute of power which Jili defines as "the bringing of the non-existent into existence." Here

he disagrees with Ibn 'Arabi', who holds that God does not create the world out of nothing or non-being, but out of His own knowledge—from being in God's knowledge only, the world is brought into actual being. That, Jili points out, would mean that the world is eternal, which it is not. God brought things from non-being and made them exist in His knowledge, and then He brought them forth from His knowledge and made them exist externally. But that does not imply, Jili points out at the same time, that things existed in non-being first, then in God's knowledge. The distinction between these two states of being in non-being and being in God's knowledge is only a logical one, and logically only the first precedes the second. But it is not a temporal distinction and the first does not precede the second from the point of view of time, there being no interval between them. God knows things as He knows Himself, yet they are not co-eternal with Him. In fact, the categories of time, space etc. are not applicable to the Absolute, for they themselves are created objects.

### *Relation between God and the World*

Jili compares the relation of the world to God to that of ice to water. God is water, the universe is the ice, and as such, the two are really identical. Just water is the substance from which ice is made, so God is the substance, the stuff of the universe. Just as the name 'ice' is lent to the frozen mass whose real name is 'water', so the name 'universe' is lent to the world though its real name is God. In this connection, Jili rejects the theory of Incarnation. Incarnation implies a difference between God and man, i.e. it implies that God manifests Himself in and through man who is different from Him. But, if God and man be identical, no incarnation is possible. He also holds that God is not immanent in the world, for immanence implies duality. God is not immanent in the world simply because He Himself is the world. The world is but the outer aspect of God—the other self of God, the mirror in which God sees Himself. In this way, Jili tries to get rid of Pantheism.

### *Perfect Man*

As we have seen, the Absolute, devoid of all attributes, relations and plurality gradually descends into the realm of attributes, relations and plurality. But, the Absolute which is one in essence cannot rest in plurality, but must return to itself as one. As water becomes ice,

so ice must again be transformed into water. This ascent of the Absolute to Itself is effected through the Perfect Man, the most perfect manifestation of God. Other objects in the universe manifest some qualities of the Absolute, but in the Perfect Man alone, the *microcosm*, is there a full manifestation of all the divine attributes. In the Perfect Man alone, does God realise and know Himself completely and God and man become united. Thus, a Perfect Man is one who has reached the end of the Path and realised his essential oneness with God. Through Divine Illumination, he comes to have an immediate vision of God and of everything on earth.

The Perfect Man has a two-fold function : cosmic and ethical. Cosmically, he is the copy of God, the archetype of Nature, the Universal Spirit from which everything is evolved, the Q'utb or Pole on which all the spheres of existence revolve. He is, thus, Cosmic Thought or Logos from which the entire universe has been fashioned. He has in him the two aspects of He-ness, and I-ness, divinity and the humanity. Thus, Jili subscribes to a doctrine of Trinnity—God, Perfect Man and World. God is the Absolute Being, the world is the Contingent Being, but the Perfect is neither this, nor that, but a third metaphysical principle. Thus, we may call God either one (the Absolute), or two (the Absolute and world), or most properly, three (the Absolute, the world and Perfect Man). Says Jili:—"If you say that God is one, you are right; or, if you say that He is two, this is also true. If you say: No, He is three, you are right, for this is the nature of man." (Tr. by Nicolson).

Every man is potentially perfect, but all do not become so actually. Those small number of men who actually realise their perfection are called prophets and saints. Among these, again, there is a difference of degree corresponding to the difference in the degree of illumination they receive. Hence, saints may be arranged in a hierarchy, of which the "Qutb" is the head. The absolutely Perfect Man or Heavenly Man is Muhammad. Hence, he is called the Light of Muhammad (Nuru'l-Muhammadiyya) or the Idea of Muhammad (al-Haqqatu'l-Muhammadiya). He has various guises and can assume every form. He appears in the form of different saints in different ages and are called by those names. He exists before the creation of the world. He is the mirror of God and God is his mirror. In fact, other Perfect Men throughout the ages do not directly receive the Illumination of Essence, the highest form of Illumination, but only through Muhammad, whom they represent. Ethically, the

Perfect Man is the mediator between God and man. He is the spiritual guide who alone can lead men to God, by making them realise their essential oneness with Him. Thus, he is not only a cosmic force, but also the spiritual governor of the world.

### *Cosmology*

Just as man is created in the image of God, so the universe is created in the image of man. The following is the description given by Jili of the creation of Heaven, Hell and the world from the Light of Muhammad, or Idea of Ideas. At first, God is wholly unmanifested, a Pure Essence, "a hidden treasure", "a dark mist". Then, wishing to manifest Himself, He created the Form of Muhammad from the light of His name: the Almighty Maker; contemplated it with His name: the All-subduing Giver; and shone on it with the name: the Gracious Pardoner. Then, it split into two halves, and from the right half Paradise (eight in number) and from the left half Hell were created by God. As regards the universe, when God looked on the Light of Muhammad with the look of perfection, it dissolved and became water. Then God looked at it with the look of grandeur, and it became waves and foam. From the foam, the gross portion of the water, God created seven earths and their inhabitants. From the subtle portion of the water, He created seven heavens and angels.

### *The Ascent of the Absolute*

As pointed out above, the Absolute descends to the world of plurality and re-ascends to itself through the Perfect Man. This is the central doctrine of his philosophy—"the notion of one Being, which is One Thought, going forth from itself in all the forms of the Universe, knowing itself as Nature, yet amidst the multifariousness of Nature, re-asserting its unity in Man". Hence, the ontological descent of the Absolute in the world must be completed by the mystical ascent of man to God. There are four stages in the ascent, corresponding to the three stages of the descent in the reverse order.

(1) The Illumination of Divine Acts. When the mystic receives this kind of illumination, he realises that God is the only Agent, and thereby merges his own will and power in those of God alone. There may be different degrees and kinds of such an illumination. The highest degree is that when the mystic sees God's will first, then His act. Hence, here he may disobey His command in order to comply



with His *will*. Such a disobedience is obedience in the eyes of God, though disobedience in the eyes of man and as such punishable.

(2) The Illumination of Divine Names. When a name of God is revealed to the mystic, his own individuality disappears, so that if you invoke God by that name, he will answer you, because the name applies to him. When he ascends higher from the stage of unity-in-plurality to that of abstract unity, or from 'fana' (self-annihilation in God) to 'baqa' (self-subsistence in God), God will answer you when any one calls him. God manifests to him His names in succession, as he ascends higher and higher, more particular or analytic names being superior to less particular or synthetic ones. Thus, the names, Existence, One, Merciful, Lord, King, Omniscient, Omnipotent etc., are gradually revealed to him. Finally, all the Divine names apply to him. Says Jili :—

“One calls Her by Her name and I answer him, and when I am called 'tis the Beloved that answers for me.

That is because we are the spirit of One, though we dwell by turn in two bodies.

Like a single person with two names: thou canst not miss by whichever name thou callest him.” (Tr. by Nicholson).

Again, “She was I and I was she and there was none to separate us”.

(3) The Illumination of Divine Attributes. When God reveals His name or attribute to the mystic, He makes him pass away from his own humanity, and puts into him in place of it a spiritual substance—called the Holy Spirit, (*ruhu l'-qads*), which is of His own Essence. But this is not Incarnation or Commixture, for that Holy Spirit is a subtle substance, neither separated from God nor joined to the man. This means that God never reveals Himself to something other than His own Self. This Holy Spirit, this substituted Divine essence is called a “man” simply because it has been substituted for of his humanity. The illuminations of the seven main attributes of God have their own effects. Thus, when the attribute of ‘Life’ is revealed to the mystic, he realises the great truth that it is through the life of God that everything subsists. He can soar in the air, walk on water, change the size of things and so on. When ‘Knowledge’ is manifested to him, he comes to know that God’s knowledge determines the nature of everything on earth. When ‘Will’ is manifested to him, he realises that human will is identical with Divine Will. ‘Will’ has nine forms,

beginning with inclination, and ending with love, when the lover and the Beloved become one. When 'Power' is revealed to him, he realises that the universe exists in God's knowledge wherefrom it is manifested, still it is not eternal. When he receives the illumination of 'Hearing', he hears the language of angels, animals, plants and minerals. When endowed with the attribute of 'Speech', Divine word comes to him, either externally and audibly, or as an inner light having a shape. When 'Sight' is revealed to him, he comes to have the power of seeing the invisible.

(4) Illumination of Divine Essence. The illumination of Divine name or attributes means the revelation of the Essence in a particular relation. But the illumination of Essence is the revelation of the Absolute as Pure Being without reference to those names and attributes. When a man is blessed with this kind of illumination, he becomes a Perfect Man, united with God,—the Microcosmic Pole on which the whole cosmos revolves. All the Divine Attributes re-appear in him. He is the Seal of Sainthood and the Vicar of God to whom prostration in prayer is due. The essences of all things that exist are drawn to obey his command, as iron is drawn by the magnet. He subdues the world by his might and can do whatever he likes,—his power is unhindered, as he is the manifestation of the Simple Essence of the Absolute, unhindered by any degree, name or quality. But this spiritual experience of oneness with God, according to Jili, is not a permanent one. Man becomes God-man during such a spiritual ecstasy, but when this state passes away, God becomes God,—man man. Jili insists on this point repeatedly, and points out that man becomes one with God temporarily, never absolutely.

The Heavenly Man (Muhammad) alone receives direct illumination of the Absolute; and it is transmitted by him, in course of ages, to other Perfect Men who are his outward forms or representatives on earth. Hence, although God is the essence of everything, none but the Heavenly Man (Logos) is his essence.

### *Religion and After Life*

According to Jili, all things were created for the worship of God; hence Divine Worship is inherent in the very nature and constitution of things. According to Jili, of the ten principal religious sects, only three, viz. Jews, Christians and Moslems are saved, not the rest.

Life, according to Jili, means the contemplation of the body by the spirit, and the spirit assumes the form of the object contemplated.

After death, the spirit has to wait for the resurrection of the body. During this intermediate stage, people move in a world of phantasy (khayal), peopled by forms, ideas, and essential characters of the actions committed by them. E.g. a sinner, forgiven by God, assumes the form of good works. Jili speaks of eight Paradises.

#### XIV Jami

The following account is based on his "Lawa'ih" (Flashes of Light), a treatise on Sufi Theology.

##### *The Absolute*

The Absolute is nothing but Being, not subject to any defect or diminution, untouched by change or variation, exempt from all plurality, the ultimate ground and cause of everything but Himself uncaused, omniscient but Himself unperceived and unknown. The Absolute in its unmanifested aspect of Pure Being is devoid of all names and attributes and exempt from all conditions and relations. He comes to have these when He is manifested in the phenomenal world. In spite of his pantheistic bend, in some passages Jami seems to emphasise the transcendence of the Absolute over His manifestations thus :—

"Thou for whose love I've sacrificed existence,  
Art, yet art not, the sum of earth's existence.  
Earth lacks true being, yet depends thereon—  
Thou art true Being, thou art pure Existence"<sup>1</sup>.

In another passage, he designates the formlessness and unchangeableness of the Source of all forms and changes, thus :—

"The Loved One is quite colourless, O heart!  
Be not engrossed with colours then, O heart;  
All colours come from what is colourless."<sup>2</sup>

The Absolute is absolute Beauty, Knowledge and Perfection. All beauty, intelligence and perfection, as found in the world, are all derived from the Absolute. In short, all things in the world are but the attributes of God. Like Jili, Jami, too, propounds the identity of essence and its attributes. God's names and attributes appear to be distinct from Him, but they are really identical with His essence, for there cannot be any multiplicity in Him. "There are not in Him". Jami points out, "many existences, but only one sole existence, and His various names and attributes are merely His modes and aspects"<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lawa'ih, Tr. by Whinfield, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Op cit, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Op cit, p. 14.

Thus, the Real Being is Omniscient in respect of His attribute of Knowledge, Omnipotent in respect of His quality of power, Absolute in respect of His will.

Like Hallaj, Jami holds that God has three stages :—

- (1) Stage of Pure Being, when He is devoid of all attributes and manifestations whatsoever. (2) The stage of first manifestation, "wherein He revealed Himself of Himself, to Himself by the attributes of Knowledge, Light, Existence and Presence"<sup>1</sup>. Knowledge implies the power of knowing and being known. Light implies the power of manifesting and of being manifested. Existence and Presence designate the power of Existing and causing to exist. This stage is called the stage of Concealment, because here although the attributes are manifested, the manifestation of the world has not yet taken place.
- (3) The stage of second manifestation or that of the world.

### *Creation*

The Absolute is One alone. But He possesses different degrees.

- (1) In the first degree, He is unmanifested and unconditioned, devoid of all relations and limitations. At this stage, He is wholly unknowable. Thus, His first characteristic is the absence of all characteristics.

(2) In the second degree, He displays Himself to Himself by means of a manifestation that contains in itself all active, necessary, and divine manifestations, as well as all passive, contingent manifestations. This is called the "First Emanation" or Universal Reason. It is a pure unity and a simple potentiality, possessing concealment, priority and existence from eternity. This is also called the "Most Holy Emanation". It is an inward, subjective revelation, consisting in the self-manifestation of the Absolute to His own consciousness from all eternity under the forms of substance, their characteristics and capacities. This is the World of Ideas or archetypes, like the Platonic Intelligible World, from which issues the Sensible World.

(3) The third degree is called "Unity of the Whole Aggregate", containing in itself all the active and efficient manifestations. It is called the Degree of Divinity. (Ilahiyat). This is called the "Second Emanation" or Universal Soul, containing all particular souls, rational animal or vegetative. This is also called the "Holy Emanation". It is an outward, objective emanation, consisting in the manifestation of

<sup>1</sup> Op-cit.

the Absolute with the impress of the properties and marks of the same substances. This is like the Sensible World of Plato, a copy of the Intelligible world.

(4) The fourth degree is the manifestation in detail of the third degree.\* It is the degree of the names and the theatres wherein they are manifested. The last two degrees belong to the sphere of necessary being.

(5) The fifth degree is the "Unity of the whole aggregate", including all the passive manifestations. It is the degree of mundane existence and contingency.

(6) The sixth degree is the manifestation in detail of the above one. It is the degree of the sensible world.

### *The Universe (Flash XXV)*

God is the only Substance, Essence and Being. He is One, and no plurality can ever enter in Him. But He may be viewed under two aspects: Viewed as the Absolute, devoid of all phenomena, all limitation, all multiplicity, He is the Truth. But viewed under the forms of plurality and multiplicity in which He displays Himself, He is the whole created Universe. Thus, the universe is the outward visible expression of the Truth, and the Truth is the inward invisible reality of the universe. Before its evolution, the Universe was identical with the Truth; after its evolution, the Truth is identical with the Universe. In fact, there is only One Reality, and concealment and manifestation are but aspects of the very same Reality. "What seen as relative appears as the world, viewed in its essence is the very Truth"<sup>1</sup>.

As usual, Jami holds that the Universe is the mirror of God, revealing His beauty and perfection. It has, as such, no objective existence apart from God—it is but the outer manifestation of Divine Thought. "Its substance", he says, "is a mental figment with no objective existence, and its form is a merely imaginary entity"<sup>2</sup>. This does not imply that the world is illusory, but only that it is not material, but ideal,—Thought in essence. He criticises Subjective Idealism thus:—"Philosophers devoid of reason find

This world a mere idea of the mind.

'Tis an idea—but they fail to see

The great Idealist who looms behind"<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Op-cit., p. 29.

<sup>3</sup> Op-cit., p. 31.

<sup>2</sup> Op-cit., p. 6.

Jami propounds the Heracleitean and Buddhist doctrine of universal flux. (Flash XXVI) "This universe", says he, "is changed and renewed unceasingly at every moment and at every breath. Every instant, one universe is annihilated and another resembling it takes its place, though the majority of men do not perceive it."<sup>1</sup> The fact is that everything is nothing but a number of accidents, linked together in a single substance viz. God. But all these accidents are constantly changing at every breath and constantly being replaced by a similar set. It is because of this rapid succession of changes that one is deceived into thinking that things are permanent. This is due to the fact that everything in the universe is the revelation of God, but He never repeats the same revelation, but every moment reveals Himself in a fresh revelation. In other words, He never manifests Himself at two consecutive moments under the guise of the same phenomena and modes. The explanation of this is that in God the opposite attributes of mercy (Jamal) and majesty (Jalal) are constantly operating. When at any moment, the mercy of God is manifested in any particular phenomenon, His majesty or omnipotence, which requires the destruction of all phenomena and semblance of plurality, at once annihilates it. At the very moment, through God's mercy, another phenomenon, similar to the prior one, is produced, which is, again, annihilated, and this goes on and on, so long as God wills it. Hence, everything on earth is momentary, though not false.

God is immanent in the world and identical with it. Ordinarily, the thing manifested and the theatre of the manifestation are different. Also, that manifestation in the theatre is only an image or form of the thing manifested, not its reality or essence. But, in God's case, manifestations and theatres are identical; also, the manifestations are His own essence. As Being is immanent in the world, His attributes, too, are so. E.g. Knowledge, which is an attribute of God, is immanent in the world, so that every existing substance is endowed with knowledge, though in different degrees, according as that substance is capable of receiving Being. The more a substance is necessary or less inter-mixed with non-being, the more perfect is its knowledge. The more a being is contingent or more inter-mixed with non-being, the less perfect is its knowledge. Even in the so-called unconscious objects, like water, knowledge is immanent. In short, as the perfect Essence of God is entirely and absolutely immanent in the essence or substance

<sup>1</sup> Op-cit., p. 29.